

S E R M O N S

ON

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S.

BY THE REVEREND

MR EDWARD ARTHUR,

M I N I S T E R

At BAREMOOR, ETAL, and last at SWALWELL, near
NEWCASTLE.

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M DCC LXXXIII.

SERMONS

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

BY THE REVEREND

ENTERED IN STATIONER'S-HALL.



PRINTED BY AND FOR W. PHOENIX

B. LA W. AVE-MARIA LANE, LONDON.

M DCC LXXXIII.

TO THE CANDID

R E A D E R.

THE following sermons are, by the desire of the author's friends, published for the benefit of his two daughters, who live at Etall in Northumberland.

THE Heterogeneous state of the manuscripts, and incorrectness of the language are, by the Author's being called of this stage of life before they were prepared for the press, much against them : Especially at this period, when the propriety of language is more studied than the truths of the gospel. Nevertheless, when external ornaments and ostentatious accomplishments are the objects of attention in some, it is to be hoped there are still many in Great Britain who will read the following discourses with pleasure, and with benefit to their immortal souls, which is the sincere wish of their

Humble Servant,

The EDITOR.

R. E. A. D. E. R.

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S E R M O N S

ON

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S.

S E R M O N I.

MATTHEW i. 21.

And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

HAPPINESS seems to be the desire of every one. However secret and latent that desire may sometimes be, yet in itself is desirable, by many desired, and by God offered. Many, however, mistake not only the nature of eternal happiness itself, but also the way and method by which they may be made partakers

of it. Men think they are too wise of themselves to be taught, or receive instruction from God; and therefore they devise means of their own, which they think may secure their eternal happiness. Some are for relying upon their own merits: Others lay the stress upon their own wills; which, if impartially looked into, bears a near affinity to the former. Some take one way, some another; while too many neglect the one and only way of obtaining happiness, which is offered to us upon our believing on a crucified Jesus; he is the way, the truth and the life; and there is no other way of being saved but by him: He was appointed and set apart for this purpose. That Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, the true Messiah, of the seed of David and Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed, seems to be the main scope of this book,—that true believers might more early see the way to eternal happiness, by him who was of old spoken of by the prophets, and now his coming into the world seems to appear. The angel, in the preceding verse, tells us, that he was *conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary*; in this verse, that she should *bring forth a Son*: May not this book very justly then claim the name of gospel, or glad tidings, seeing the doctrine contained

in it is the most joyful news that ever came into the world—it discovers to believers their redemption from sin and misery, by Jesus Christ the Son of God; it is called the gospel by us, according to St Matthew, because it is generally agreed that he was the penman of it: He who formerly was a sinner, is now a saint;—formerly a publican, now an apostle: He it was that God, by his special providence, did make choice of to write this gospel to the world.—The former part of this chapter is a genealogy, or roll of the pedigree of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This verse which I have now read, are the words of the angel that appeared to Joseph, fortelling the birth and the end of our Saviour's coming into the world.

WE have the nativity of our Saviour prognosticated, or foretold, *and she shall bring forth a Son*: In which we have the person prophesying, supposed to be the angel spoken of in the former verse; he was dispatched by God, for Joseph's satisfaction, for the virgin's vindication and reputation.

THE person prophesied of; the Son, *she shall bring forth a Son*, not thy natural Son, but her Son; not begotten by thee, but brought

forth of her, and flesh of her flesh. We have a precept for the imposition of his name, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus*: Where we have the precept itself, *thou shalt call*, it is the will of God it should be so, it is most agreeable to the end of his coming into the world; Jesus is the name that is above every name, the name of our blessed Saviour.

THE reason, or signification of this name, *He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins*. Joshua and Jesus have their names from the same word, which signifies salvation. Joshua was a temporal Saviour, who was to save the whole body of the Jews from the Canaanites their enemies, but Jesus was to be another sort of a Saviour, for he was to save his people from their sins; and hereby the angel hints to us the mistaken notion of the Jews, in thinking that the Messiah was to be an earthly prince, and give them temporal deliverance and salvation from their enemies; whereas his end and design of coming into the world was to save his people from their sins, the greatest of all evils.

THE words being thus divided and explained, we observe the following doctrine:

THAT Jesus Christ saves his people from their sins, and by doing so he effectually notices his name, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.* It is evident also from what was prophesied of him in the Old Testament dispensation, * *Behold a virgin shall bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Emanuel.* There is no other name under heaven given amongst men, neither is there salvation in any other. † *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

IN dilating upon this doctrine, shall endeavour to prosecute the following method :

First, SHEW the properties of this salvation.

Second, WHAT kind of sin he saves them from.

Third, WHY he saves them.

Fourth, SOME practical inferences by way of application.

FIRST, Shew the properties of this salvation.

It is a free salvation, not a salvation procured by our merits or deserts ; God loves free-

* Isa. vii. 14.

† Tit. ii. 14.

ly, and justifies freely by his grace :—Though pardon of sin is an act of justice in God, which respects to Christ's satisfaction, yet it is also an act of free grace. Was it not free grace that contrived this salvation by Jesus Christ ?—Was it not free grace that bestowed it on thee ? and not on another ;—it is given without money and without price, whoever thirsts for this water of life may have it, Christ offers it freely. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* Whether we look to the contrivance of this salvation, or the actual bestowing of it—it is still free, being justified freely by his grace.

FOR although faith be required as that which gives a title, and qualifies us for receiving covenant blessings and repentance, charity and obedience, as evidences of this faith, yet faith itself is also the free gift of God to sinners ; for let us look what way we will, this salvation is the free gift of God.

IT is a complete salvation : Men oftentimes, when on earth, are freed from this and the other danger, yet this is not a complete delivery, for they fall one day or other :—The children of Israel were saved from the Egyptians at the Red-sea, but afterwards their carca-

ses fell in the wilderness. But this salvation which God bestows upon his people, is a complete salvation, in regard of the complete and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ that believers are cloathed and invested with, so far as it has respect to the work of grace, it is complete in all the faculties of the soul. The dark mind is enlightened, the dead heart is enlivened, the unruly will is renewed, and the wandering affections captivated. Complete also in regard of that full deliverance from sin at death, and of that complete and perfect happiness which we shall enjoy with God for ever hereafter.

It is an eternal salvation, * *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.* He is not only the author of this salvation, but the finisher of it also;—*He is the author and finisher of our faith*:—This is a salvation purposed and contrived from eternity, † *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* The saints heads were destined long since to this diadem; they were crowned in God's eternal council before the foundation of the world.—It is an eternal salvation in re-

* Heb. v. 9.

† Matth. xxv. 34.

gard to its duration and continuance—it shall never have an end. Men may have deliverance from troubles, evils, and enemies for some short space in this world, yet this does not last ; —but this is a salvation that is begun in conversion, completed in glorification, and terminates with eternity, *So shall we be ever with the Lord :* Believers are as pillars in the house of God, and go no more out ; they are therefore ever with him.

It is a great salvation that Jesus Christ confers upon his People : *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.* It was a great salvation that the children of Israel met with, when God delivered them from the Egyptians ; it was a great deliverance Peter met with, when Christ saved and delivered him from the devouring waves of the sea : But these were only corporeal deliverances, and not to be compared to this, which is the saving of precious and immortal souls.—Great, in that it is the contrivance and gift of the great God.—Great, in regard of the vast price that was paid for this purchase, even for the salvation of the soul,—nothing less than the blood of Jesus, who was the Son of God.—Great, in regard of the great things believers shall be possessed of, *Eye hath*

not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the good things that God has prepared for them that love him.—Great, in regard of its duration ;—it was contrived before the world, it will abide to all eternity, so shall we be ever with the Lord.

IT is a common salvation, * *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation ;—this was an excellent, but yet a weighty subject that he was to write about, the common salvation ; not a salvation equally common to the good and bad, nor to all persons alike, but to all believers, who have a joint title to it, and common interest in it, that wherein all saints have a confidence. It is common in regard of the purchaser of it, viz. Jesus Christ, our common Saviour,—in regard of the price paid for it, the precious blood of Christ,—in regard of the common way by which it is obtained and secured, and that is, by faith, and in regard of the common earnest that is given them for it, and longings after it,—the holy spirit of God is common to all believers, and gives them a pledge and earnest, and sets them a longing after and breathing for this salvation.*

* Jude 3.

It is a wonderful salvation.—Among the many wonderful workings of God, this is none of the least, it is matter of wonder and astonishment in the believers' eyes, that God should pass by so many of the world, and pitch upon them to be partakers of that wonderful salvation:—It is wonderful, in that it is wrought by a God that does wonders,—* *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among st the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* Wonderful, in that it was the product and effect of wondrous love, upon and unto those that were wonderful finners.

It is a joyful salvation.—Indeed it must be confessed and allowed, that all who have a right and title to salvation have not spiritual joy; for sometimes their right is hid from them, which keeps them drooping and hanging down the head all their days: But this I say, that they only have the best reason to rejoice that have a right to this salvation, † *My soul shall be joyful in the Lord: It shall rejoice in his salvation.*

SECOND, What kind of sin he saves them from.

* Exod. xv. 11.

† Psal. xxxv. 9.

HE saves his people from their sins, *Negatively* and *Positively*.

First, HE saves them *Negatively*.

HE does not altogether save them while in this world from temptations to sin,—the best of men have had their temptations, and sometimes from their nearest friends;—experience tells us this, that we are surrounded with various tempters and temptations too: While we are besieged without by an evil adversary, the devil, we are betrayed within by our own deceitful hearts:—But revealed religion gives us abundant instances of the truth of this, that the best of men are not, while in this world, fully freed from temptations to sin. Job was one that God was pleased to give a distinguishing character of—he calls him a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. Yet for all this he was liable to temptations; and his own wife, through the instigation of Satan, was the cunning tempter, * *Curse God and die*. What a cursed counsel this! from one that should have administered conjugal help and assistance to him. Good cause had he to turn her off with that sharp rebuke, *Get thee*

* Job ii. 9.

behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me. Although God's people may meet with various temptations, yet it is matter of great comfort to all true believers, when they reflect, that *God is faithful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able.*

HE does not, while upon earth, save them from sin, or entirely from enemies; the best of God's people have their foibles; they find a law in their members waring against the law of their minds, and are made to cry out with the apostle, ** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* We must suffer a sort of contentment with sin while in this world; for it is bred so in us, that till our bones, like Joseph's, be carried out of the Egypt of this world, it will not be got out; for there is nothing cleaves more close and pertinacious to us than sin. Herein Christ deals with his people, as some conquerors with their enemies, whom they had taken prisoners, who killed them not immediately, till the day of triumph came. The saints day of triumph is not in this world, therefore we must still be praying to be freed from this body of sin and death, till the triumphant day appears, when a happy freedom will take its date.

* Rom. vii. 24.

Second, Positively, what he does save them from.

HE saves them from the guilt of sin, in justification.—Guilt, in a political sense, is nothing else than the state or condition in which things are, till they are either absolved or condemned: In a divine sense, it is that obligation to punishment which sin makes us liable unto; this guilt Christ saves his people from in their justification, by the imputation of his righteousness, * *There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: There is no condemnation to them, because the guilt of their sins is done away, and they walk after the dictates of the unerring Spirit of God. Our being saved from the guilt of sin is sometimes expressed by covering sin, by not having it imputed, by casting it behind his back, † Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.—Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*

HE saves them from the reigning power and dominion of sin and hell, in sanctification.—Believers are not totally freed from the inbeing

* Rom. viii. 1.

† Psal. xxxii. 1. 2.

of sin, while they are embodied in tabernacles of clay;—but upon their embracing the offers of a Saviour, and closing with him, then grace gets the ascendancy, and a stronger than the strong man takes possession; which verifies that word, * *For sin shall not have dominion over you; —for ye are not under the law, but under grace:* Sin may rebel, but it cannot reign in a saint. Regenerate persons have this privilege beyond and above others, because they are not under the law, but under grace: They are indeed under the rule and direction of the law, but not under the curse and malediction of the law: They are not under the law as a covenant of life, but they are under it as an eternal rule of living. Sin, that reigned in us unto death, by the righteousness of Jesus Christ is done away, and grace takes its place upon our becoming his people, † *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.* He lives for ever in heaven, to apply, by his prevailing intercession, what he impetrated and obtained for us here on earth, by his meritorious satisfaction, ‡ *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

* Rom. vi. 14.

† Rom. vii. 21.

‡ John i. 7.

THEY are saved from a total apostacy from God, and from a final and entire falling into sin ; —this depends upon the merits of Christ's satisfaction, the prevalency of his intercession, the unchangeableness of his affection, whom he loves once, he loves to the end ; how then can they fall away who are supported by such a powerful love, and strong affection ? There is much to be observed in *Matth. xxiv. 24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch, that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect.* Which plainly supposeth, that it is not possible that they shall so far apostize, as totally to fall away and renounce the doctrine of Christianity, and believe false Christs and false prophets. In this respect, a believer's case under the covenant of grace, is better than Adam's was under the covenant of works when he was in paradise,

HE saves them from the eternal punishment due to sin :—If Christ had not come into the world we must all have perished, and that eternally ; but his main end of coming was to save his people from their sins. This seems necessarily to follow upon the former head, if the reigning power of sin be done away, and the

obligation to punishment should cease, then the desert of sin must be done away also, otherwise it would impeach the honour and justice of God ; it would be a diminishing and lessening the merit and worth of our Saviour's satisfaction. There is none that believeth in him shall perish. It is certain, and may be depended upon, that Jesus Christ saves from everlasting death ; experience found it true, that they who looked upon the serpent lifted up upon the pole by Moses, did not die, but lived, * *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole ; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

T H I R D, The reasons why he saves them, *Negatively and Positively.*

First, Why he saves them Negatively.

N O T for the foresight of faith, or holiness in believers ; this is not the reason why he saves his people, † *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in*

* Numb. xxi. 9.

† Eph. i. 4.

love. We may here see that our eternal election, and consequently salvation, proceed not from the foresight of holiness; but this was the fruit and effect of our being elected—he made choice of us that we should be holy, not because we were so, or should be so: This was the way and mean appointed, not the motive and reason that procured, or effected our salvation. Holiness is here declared to be the effect, not the cause of our election. God made choice of the Gentles; not because they were holy (they were far from it, they were far from God) but designing that they should be holy in this world, and perfectly so in the next.

Not for their good works does Christ save believers;—if it were so, that our good deeds could merit any favour from the hand of God, then there must of necessity be some proportion betwixt the merit, and the favour merited; but there can be no such proportion here, for our righteousness is but as filthy rags, * *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*—The universal degeneracy and depravity of mankind is such, that the very best are

* Isa. lxiv. 6.

no better than an unclean thing ;—our righteousness is made of patches, and not only so, but putrid and filthy ; how then was it possible that our works could merit salvation from the hand of a pure and holy God ?—A God whose justice was so much incensed, that nothing but the death of Jesus could satisfy divine justice, and atone for sin—can such a salvation be so easily purchased as by our merits ? if we can call any thing of ours merit.

Second, Why he saves them Positively.

BECAUSE it is his own good pleasure, or free will to save them—whom he will, he saves : It is owing to the good pleasure of his will that he adopts any to the number of his sons, and consequently to eternal salvation, * *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.* All God's attributes are conspicuous in our salvation, but, above all, his grace does eminently appear.—His sovereign grace and good will are the only motives that induces him to save us, † *Fear not little flock ; for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* The kingdom here spoken of can be nothing else than

* Eph. i. 5.

† Luke xii. 32.

that state of honour, glory, and dignity which believers shall be partakers of in the next world; not from merit, but gift; not from good motions and inclinations of their own, but from the divine will,—their salvation flows from the free donation of him who has life at his disposal.

THAT thereby his Father's and his own love might be testified;—this was the most endearing testimony of love that ever was: Never was such love heard of as this, for the Father to part with his only Son,—for the Son to give himself freely for us all. The Father's love appears in his contriving this salvation, and in sending his Son to accomplish it, ** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Christ's love to his people is past finding out, and beyond human knowledge, it commends itself to us, in *that he died for us when we were enemies to him, he tasted death for every man, † But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

* John iii. 16,

† Heb. ii. 9.

HE saves his people, that his interest might be maintained:—We do not say but that infinite wisdom might have contrived other methods and ways for the advancing of his interest, but this seems to be one end of his saving them in the way that is laid down; and it is not so much a cause for moving Christ to save them, as an effect of their salvation and delivery from sin.—God's interest would have suffered greatly in the world, if a Saviour had not been sent, for the establishing and consummating of it; even that which was spoken of Christ by the prophets, without his appearing after as he did, or God's eminent appearance some other way, could not have advanced and maintained the interest of religion.

THAT his people might be glorified: This made the apostle Peter to bless God, and to rejoice with exceeding joy, * *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.* This sure and solid hope,—this crown which they were to receive, was obtained for them by Jesus Christ, that so they might receive the end of their faith, even

* 1 Pet. i. 3. 4.

the salvation of their souls.—Sometimes God is pleased to allow his people a foretaste of this happiness, for Christ did not die to give them some of the first fruits, for that they might be possessors of the whole, and fully satisfied in the fruition of their reward.

LASTLY, to conclude.

Is it so that Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer is the Saviour of sinners? Then there is just ground of reproof to those who expect salvation any other way than by Jesus Christ; because they condemn the wisdom of God in contriving this method to save sinners;—they despise the authority of God, who commands all the ends of the earth to look up to him and be saved: They despise the love of a bleeding and dying Redeemer;—they undervalue, and count it as a thing of no worth;—they despise the offers of salvation made by his ambassadors; and in so doing they despise both God and Christ. *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.*

Is it so that Jesus Christ came to save sinners? —Then it reproves those that take no care of

their eternal salvation ; for they care for nothing more than for what they should eat, and what they should drink, and wherewithal they should be cloathed, and in the meantime neglect what concerns their eternal happiness.— They, like Martha, cumber themselves about many things ; *but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that better part* : There are too many of us like Martha ; we project, and take care about those things that do not profit, and postpone the great concern of our souls.

Is it so that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of his people ? then it informs us of the happiness of believers.—He is a common Saviour, and the salvation he works for his people is common ;—but only to believers, which renders them happy beyond all others ;—because the devil cannot bereave them of this happiness, nor break the friendship betwixt Christ and believers.—The church of God still keeps up its head in every part of the world, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against her*. Sin cannot break this union, nor destroy their title to salvation : The people of God may fall as Peter did, yet his covenant he will not break, * *If they break my statutes, then will I visit their transgressions, but*

* Psal. lxxxix. 31.—34.

my loving kindness will I not take from them, &c. Death cannot break the friendship, nor deprive them of that happiness; on the contrary, they that die in the Lord are declared to be blessed, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, &c.* We are assured that death cannot separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus; neither is there a more evident, nor greater demonstration of the love of the omnipotent Author of nature, towards fallen man, than his sending his own Son into the world to save them, and by unvailing his godhead, as it were, for a time; and by taking our natures upon him, uniting that to the divine nature, sin only excepted, a human body and a reasonable soul did he take to himself, *Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.* The body of Christ was so fitted, that it might be joined to the Deity, that an expiatory sacrifice might be made for sin.—The sufferings of his body were nothing, compared to those of his soul, * *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* This plainly intimates to us that he had a soul, otherways he had been only the Saviour of the bodies of his people, and not of their

* Matth. xxvi. 38.

souls. It is a great demonstration of love for one to die for a righteous man ; but Christ, in bringing about our salvation, demonstrated his love by dying for us while we were sinners, nay, enemies unto him.

Is it so that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners ? Let us lament and mourn to see so few coming unto him to be saved from their sins ; let us take up our lamentations in the words of Jeremiah, *The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts.* This made priests, as well as people, mourn ; have we not as great reason ? when the degeneracy and depravity of mankind is arrived to such a height, that they will not come unto Christ that they may have life. Is Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners ? Let all then be exhorted to come unto him, and no longer remain in their former state of security, but to put off the old man with his deeds, and embrace the offers of salvation as tendered to us in the gospel. Let me exhort you to consider, Christ invites and entreats you to come unto him that ye may be saved, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*—Here is a sweet invitation, enforced with a gracious encouragement.—Christ invites such as are weary of the burden

of sin, that they may find rest to their wearied souls.

CONSIDER the encouragement Christ offers to such as believe on his name, *Jesus said, I am the bread of life, he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.* Christ is the bread that giveth spiritual and eternal life, and the bread that upholdeth both; but the encouragement is only to those that believe on him: Eternal life is promised but to them that the Father hath given him:—Christ gives it to them, * *And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Here is the greatest encouragement for poor sinners to fly unto Jesus Christ, he will give them eternal life, and none shall ever be able to separate them from God:—He never is forgetful of them, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

CONSIDER God expects that you should come unto him and be saved:—Why are all those entreaties, invitations, and encouragements offered, if it is not so that he expects us to come

* John x. 28.

unto him, that we may have life.—It will be well for us if we do not frustrate the divine expectations, *Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes.*—There is no other way of being saved but by him, *neither is there salvation in any other: For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*—There is no salvation, nor any possibility of attaining it, either for Jew or Gentile, but by Jesus Christ,—for he is the way, the door, the truth, and the life; and there is no coming unto the Father but by him.—He was appointed, sealed, and anointed for this purpose:—He was appointed by the Father, *Who was faithful to him that appointed him.* He was faithful in all things, and true to his father that constituted and appointed him to those offices: He did most faithfully reveal God, and his saving will to them, to whom he sent him as his great prophet:—He has fully discharged the office of his priesthood, and as faithfully intercedes with his Father for us as ever. He was anointed for this solemn charge, which his very name so testifies, *We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ, or the Anointed, God hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows;*—above all kings and potentates;—above all Christians who par-

take of this anointing, it denotes a fulness in Christ to supply and save us.—He had not the spirit by measure as others had; and what others enjoy is only from his fulness:—He is able to save all who come to him by faith.

CONSIDER, if we do not embrace Jesus Christ, the appointed and anointed of the Father, we must all inevitably perish eternally; there is no other Saviour beside him, and out of Christ, God is a consuming fire, *And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* The prophet spoken of must be understood of Christ;—for he was a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet:—Now, every one that does not believe and obey him, will as surely be destroyed, as those that disobeyed Moses. The apostle is so sensible of it, that he thinks it impossible for any to escape who neglects this salvation, and despises this Saviour, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*

THIS has been the practice of the people of God, both in former days, and later times, to come unto Jesus Christ, and embrace and believe on him as their Saviour;—this should influence us to receive him as ours. It is record-

ed in scripture, for the commendation of some, that they died in the belief of this, *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.* This is a noble testimony that is here given of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. and shews us what their practice was while in the flesh, with respect to their eternal salvation; they believed in the Messias who was to come, and in the faith of this they lived and died. They went to their long homes before their promised Saviour came into the world, but yet they believed he would come, and expected salvation from him; ought not our faith on a Saviour already come to be as lively and vigorous as theirs was, who believed on him long before?

Now let all admire free grace,—that God should incline our hearts to embrace the offers of a crucified Redeemer, and cry out, *What am I, or my Father's house; what is man that thou shouldest be thus mindful of him. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.* In such words and expressions as these we should admire free grace, the matchless mercy and goodness of God, *Bless*

the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Be content with your lot in this world, submit to the divine providence, and joyfully say with the apostle, *I have learned in whatsoever state I am in, therewith to be content.*—Happy were it for us all if we could say so.—This the apostle learned in Christ's school, nature teacheth no such thing.

ENDEAVOUR what you can the salvation of others:—One that has embraced Jesus Christ will not only be content in his own salvation, but will also strive to gain souls, *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.* Stupendous work of humility and unwearied diligence!

LAY to heart your deplorable state; consider what you are doing, and what will become of you, if you persist and abide in your evil ways.—Cry out with the jailer, *Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?* Oh! tremble at the thoughts of your being alienated from Christ; for while you are so, you are strangers to the covenant of promise, aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, having no hope, being without God in the world.

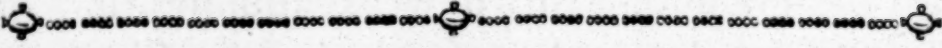
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BE not dejected, but rejoice, for the Lord calls you:—He not only invites you to come and be saved, but he also argues the case with you, * *Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed.—For why will you die, O house of Israel?*—He knocks at the door of your hearts by his word. O open unto him the everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

“ Now unto him who is able to save us, and to present us without spot or blemish before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

* Ezek. xviii. 31.

S E R M O N II.



I T I M O T H Y i. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.



G R E A T and long preparations commonly bespeak the solemnity and greatness of the work for which they are designed. He that would but consider the vast preparations that were made by the Papists in Q. Elizabeth's day, might easily conjecture that something extraordinary was on foot.—One that would look into the Old Testament œconomy, might there see, that the great types, the divinely in-

spired prophets, prefigured and held forth something extraordinary and solemn to succeed; these are now verified, in that a Son is born, *who shall save his people from their sins.*—David's amassing such great sums for the building of the temple, might have made one conclude that it would be a magnificent structure.—But lo! here is a design of God's, as far transcending that, as the substance doth the shadow.—That glorious temple was but a type and figure of the great Messiah, a weak adumbration of that spiritual temple, of which Jesus Christ is the *chief corner stone.* The preparations for that material temple were but of few years, but the preparations for this spiritual temple was contrived before the foundations of the world. What was designed is come to pass, *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* In these words there are three things to be particularly considered.

THE truth and certainty, together with the worth and excellency of this gospel revelation, *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.* Truth ought always to be acceptable; no truth more a truth than this, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and therefore

no truth ought to be more acceptable to mankind.

A COMFORTABLE revelation, which contains in it the sum of the gospel.—*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* It holds forth the efficacy and extent of Christ's satisfaction, in that a salvation was purchased for the greatest of sinners, or wanderers, that so the lost sheep might be restored to the one sheepfold.

THE apostle had such an humble apprehension of himself, as to be reckoned among the chief of sinners; *of whom I am chief.* This denotes the apostle's humility, who, though he was in the esteem of all good men one of the greatest of saints, yet accounted himself one of the chiefest of sinners. A true penitent does not diminish, but aggravates his sin; he sets it continually before his face, which is a good mean of keeping him humble. Persecutors are amongst the chief of sinners, the apostle reckons himself so, because he was once a *persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious.* But he obtained mercy through Jesus Christ,

That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners is a faithful saying, and worthy of all accep-

tation. In discoursing from these words, I purpose the following method, whereby the truth of this doctrine may be further illustrated and established.

I. I SHALL endeavour to make the truth and worth of this saying appear.

II. LAY down some of the properties of this Saviour.

III. How he saves sinners.

IV. APPLY.

I RETURN to the first thing proposed in the method, which was,

First, To endeavour to make the truth and worth of this saying appear.—*It is a faithful saying,* because we have God's word for it, that he should be the Saviour of sinners, if we would have argued with those that deny the scripture to be the word of God, we must have proceeded upon another topic, but this is a happiness that by many of us its verity is not called in question. If then we believe the word of God, we must depend upon the fidelity of this saying, that *Jesus Christ is the Saviour of*

sinners. No sooner had our first parents fallen from their happy state of innocence, but God, for the comfort and encouragement of his posterity, plighted his word for it, *That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*; that is, he would send a Saviour into the world, who would deliver his people from the fatal consequences of the devil's temptations, which might wound their heel, but not their head or heart; because Christ was to be their Saviour, who would bruise the serpent's head, and destroy the works of the devil.

HIS coming into the world to save sinners, was agreeable to what was prophesied of old concerning him. Those things that were prophesied of him, in respect to the salvation of sinners, are actually fulfilled in the gospel. I shall mention some of them which are now accomplished, and by which the faithfulness of this saying will more evidently appear.

IT will appear that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, if we consider the time when he was born. That which was prophesied, with respect to the time of his nativity, actually came to pass.—The Messiah was to be born of the royal house of David, but at that time when

it was in the most forlorn and contemptible condition, like a tree that is cut down, whereof nothing is left but a stump or root underground. The prophet Isaiah foretold the time, * *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.* This prophecy was fulfilled, in regard Christ came of that root, and at that time, *Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus*; compare this with where Christ is said to be *The root of David.* He was the branch of David as man, but the root of David as God, but yet he came at that time when there was little left of David, save the stump or root.—If we consider his forerunner, this seems to be very pointedly taken notice of by Isaiah, *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God.* These seem very plainly to be the words of John the Baptist, by whose cry Christ's coming into the world was ushered in, *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, &c.* Thus you see one testament unfolds another: It was prophesied of him that he should cry at this time, it is here fulfilled; he did not only cry, but prepared the way.

* Isa. xi. 1.

THE faithfulness of this saying, *Christ is the Saviour of sinners*, will appear, if we consider the place of his nativity: What was prophesied concerning him, that was accomplished: It was prophesied he should be born at Bethlehem, *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.* This prophecy was fulfilled, in that he was born at that place:—*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.*

IF we consider the tribe and family he was to come of:—He was to come of the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; that is, till the Messias come: He was to come while the sceptre was in Judah's hand; but about that time when it was to be taken out of it. Of this tribe he came, and of the family of David, which is evident: Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David? The horn of our salvation is raised up out of the house of David.—If we consider, that it was prophesied our Saviour should be born of a virgin, and that the same was fulfilled, Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name*

Immanuel. This is very agreeable to what St Matthew writes, *He knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son, and he called his name Jesus.* We may then deduce one of the strongest arguments from the faithfulness of this saying, seeing what was foretold of him did really and exactly come to pass: This also is one of the strongest arguments to enforce the worth of it upon us, *It is worthy of all acceptation*, because it is true and faithful; it is worthy also, because of the great things he has done for us, what he is still doing, and what at last believers through him will enjoy and possess.

Second, I come now to the second general head, which was, to shew some of the properties of this Saviour.

HE is a glorious Saviour; he is so both in himself and to believers:—In himself, in that he is the righteousness of his Father's glory, God equal with the Father.—He counts it not robbery to be our Saviour, and our Maker too:—He is a glorious Saviour to believers, in respect to those things that he hath done and purchased for them:—By his death we may all live in hope here, and live a life of glory and happiness hereafter.—He is a more glorious Sa-

viour than any temporary deliverer ; more glorious than Moses, * *For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.*—This he proves, by letting us see that God is better than man : He that made the church is better than the church itself. Now Christ is God, he made the church of which Moses was but a member, and therefore much more glorious.

HE is a commissioned Saviour, *Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved.* That he is commissioned appears from the following observations :—He was appointed for this purpose : The Father solemnly designed him for this work, *Behold my servant whom I have chosen.—I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*

HE was anointed for this end to be the Saviour of sinners, which his very name testifies, *We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ, i. e. the Anointed.*—He was anointed as well as appointed ; he was filled with the Spirit, and that without measure, *He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,* and so it denotes a fullness and a sufficiency in Christ to supply and save us.

HE was sealed also to this end.—This seems to include, in a great measure, the two former; the seals are commonly the last action in concluding an agreement. Princes when they send their ambassadors to one another, they commonly give their commission sealed, that they may confirm their ambassadors:—Christ Jesus was thus confirmed as God's commissioner to a lost world, *For him hath God the Father sealed; sealed him by his Spirit, appointed and anointed him to this purpose.*

HE is a complete and sufficient Saviour: He has completely fulfilled those things for which he was sent into the world, *He is able to save to the utmost all them that come to him by faith.* He is complete in himself, complete in what he hath done for sinners, *i. e.* completely fulfilling the Father's will. The deliverance that the children of Israel had from the Egyptians at the Red Sea was very great, but not being complete, cannot be compared to this: For God being so much provoked with them, that they never got a sight of the promised country, but fell in the wilderness. But Christ is a complete Saviour, and gives his people a full deliverance,
** And we are complete in him, which is the head*

* Col. ii. 10.

of all principality and power. God had never sealed his commission unless he had been a complete and sufficient Saviour.

HE is a faithful Saviour:—Never any who put their trust in him, (** Who was faithful to him that appointed him,*) shall be ashamed or confounded.—He faithfully discharged the great trust, and all those offices to which he was appointed.

HE is a humble Saviour.—Humility was evident in all his actions, and therein he gave us a perfect pattern to imitate, *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* His humility appeared in this, that he sought not to advance himself, *I seek not mine own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth.*

Third, How he saves sinners.

HE saves sinners by his death, *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* If Christ had not died, there had been no hope of our recovery from the thralldom of sin; there neither had, nor could have

* Heb. iii. 2.

been any satisfaction made to the justice of God; but divine goodness had compassion on us in our vile and destitute state, while we were lying wallowing in our blood, then his time of passing by was a time of love:—He died that we might live, and his love commends itself to us in that he died for us when we were enemies to him, * *Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

By working faith in us.—Faith makes us believe on him, and points out the way to salvation; otherways why did the Jailor cry out, † *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* And they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* This shews, that faith is that which God requires of us in order to fit us for eternal happiness. He works faith in us both by his Word and Spirit, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Persons must hear that they may believe, and the word must be preached that so they may hear: The bare hearing of the word will not convey faith, unless the spirit accompany it; the word is indeed the instrumental cause, but the spirit is the efficient. The grace of faith is wrought in

* 1 Theff. v. 10.

† Acts xvi. 30. 31.

us by the spirit in the act of hearing: A faith true, though obscure, that has the hope of *things not seen*; and by the universal admiration of grace, begun by our blessed Saviour, enlarged by his apostles, and carried on by believers, under the blessed gospel, *the evidence of such things*. All types that darkened this faith are enlightened; all veils that hid it are rent, and taken away; *all walls of separation are broken down*; all narrowness of opinions removed; all people under heaven invited to be partakers of the same charity, and the same hope of glory. Blessed be God, who has conferred this knowledge upon the inhabitants of Great Britain, *this great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*; this last, and universal declaration of life and immortality, brought to light in the gospel by the Messiah. * *I know that Messiah cometh, who is called Christ; and when he is come, he will teach us all things*, by continually interceding and pleading for us:—If it were not that we had an advocate at the Father's right-hand, our faith would soon fail us. Peter would have found this true to his cost, if our Saviour had not prayed for him, *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*. The apostle's zeal for his divine master, made him receive a severe rebuke

* John iv. 25.

for once using the sword in his defence, *Put up thy sword*, says he, *into its place. He that taketh the sword, shall perish by the sword.* O Peter! this is an unseasonable passion, proceeding from your intemperate zeal; submit with patience; oppose not authority; do not thou break the laws of thy country for kindness and love to me, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.* If it were not for this powerful intercession of our blessed Saviour's, who could be able to stand? All thanksgiving and praise be to our God, that *We have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Fourth, To make some application.

Is it so, that it is a faithful saying that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners? then here is just ground of reproof to those that expect salvation from others. Does not the scripture plainly tell us that he is come?—Are not those things that were prophesied of old exactly come to pass concerning him? Have not the faithful in all ages believed on him? even those that went to their long homes before the great promise was fulfilled; yet they lived and died in the faith of this, that Jesus Christ would come, and expected salvation from him. Had it not been

for this great propitiatory sacrifice, *the death of the Messias*, there had been no salvation for any man, *He is the only saving name under heaven.*

LET us lament and mourn to see so few coming unto Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners, in our Saviour's words, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.*—Too many of us, like Martha, cumber ourselves about many things, and neglect the one thing needful.—It is the duty of all believers to come to Christ, yea, it is their highest interest to dedicate and employ their lives to the honour of Christ in this world.—We ought to exert a vigorous activity in our holy profession:—To set up God's throne, and to cast down Satan's kingdom:—To get our hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord:—*To grow up into Christ in all things, till we are filled with all the fulness of God.*

Finally, Let all be exhorted to come unto Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners, let us make no delay in a matter of such vast importance; let us put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man in righteousness, and true holiness: Embrace the offers of a Saviour while they are tendered unto you, *Whatsoever ye do,*

do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: Till you can appeal to him, as St Peter did, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.—These two things in the text might move to embrace and receive Jesus Christ as a Saviour, if seriously considered, *It is a faithful saying, and it is worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save even the chief of sinners.*—May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

S E R M O N III.

COLOSSIANS iii. 4.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

TRUE religion, even from the days of Cain and Abel, having always met with strong opposition from cruel and wicked men, God of his infinite wisdom, and boundless goodness, saw it highly necessary, for the support, encouragement, interest, comfort, and establishment of his people, to grant them clear manifestations, and large promises of present protection, and future felicity. *Behold*, said the Lord to his servant Moses, and the Israelites,

I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared; and if, indeed, thou shalt obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and an adversary to thy adversaries. Moses had a perfect assurance of the great things reserved in store for those who walk uprightly, after this world, with all its enjoyments, shall come to an end; as saith the inspired apostle of the Gentiles, By faith Moses choosed rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt: For what? because he had respect unto the recompence of reward.

AT Colosse, a city of Phrygia, in the lesser Asia, numbers were converted, strengthened, and supported by the preaching of Epaphras, a faithful minister of Christ, by whom the Lord was pleased to manifest his goodness. And the oracle of truth making large discoveries of divine aid to the upright in heart, unto Paul while he was in bonds at Rome, and informing him of the danger in which the Colossian were from the Jewish doctors, who laboured with philosophy and enticing words to subject them to the ceremonial law, stirred him up to send

unto them Tychicus, with full assurances of heavenly aid, protection, deliverance, and salvation if they continued stedfast in the faith; and in his epistle, which he had written for their peace and comfort, proved the fallacy of their enemies arguments, attacked and battered down the system of their heathen philosophy, which, in a most cunning and subtle way, recommended and pressed the worshipping of the Supreme Being by angels and creatures of its imagination: And likewise gave them directions for their future conduct, *Wherefore, faith he, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?* meaning superstitious rites and ordinances of the same nature; appointments of men, *Touch not; taste not; handle not;* all which things are to perish with the using; because they are after the commandments and doctrines of men, *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh:* As if he had said, These things may, to the eyes of men, appear to contain some excellent doctrine or wise institution, because they give more to God than he requires, which their followers account commendable; such as rendering an implicit o-

bedience to all the commands of superiors, punishing the body with fastings, watchings, and the like, without any respect or regard to the cravings and necessities of nature ; but these things are not honourable in the eyes of God, nor can they meet with his approbation ; for they are done merely to procure some carnal interest, or advance some carnal design ; therefore fly these, and follow after godliness, that when you shall have taken a final farewell of this world, and all its enjoyments, you may rest in peace ; and that when *Christ, who is our life, shall appear, you may also appear with him in glory.*

T H I S verse contains three remarkable propositions.

T H A T Jesus Christ is the believer's life.

T H A T our Lord Jesus Christ shall make a second appearance in the world.

T H A T when Jesus Christ shall make his second appearance, all true believers shall appear with him in glory.

T H E first of these propositions is spoken with

great emphasis, for the comfort of all dejected and persecuted Christians: As if he had said, Jesus Christ who is my support under all my afflictions, and my help under all my persecutions, hath your interest at heart, he will, when troubles and enemies press you behind and before, and on every side, come, in almighty power, to your assistance, interpose, and give you deliverance, *No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper*; and those that rise up against you to do you harm he will make to fall for your sake. He will muster the very stars, and bring them in battle array against your enemies, *The stars in their courses fought against Sisera*. No enemy who can rise up against you is an overmatch for your royal commander, *He is great in might, and strong in battle*. Devils in hell, and wicked men upon earth may form combinations against your peace, and make assaults upon you to deprive you of your life, but he who sits in heaven shall laugh at their combinations, and have their assaults in derision, *He that toucheth you, toucheth him in the most tender part, even the apple of his eye*. And if, of his infinite wisdom, he sees it proper to continue you in the furnace of affliction for a little time, be not discouraged, it is by the cross that you must come to the crown; he in-

tends nothing by it but a higher refinement of your affections, and the *purging away of your dross and tin*: Not a hair of your head shall be singed, nor shall your cloaths be changed, nor shall so much as the smell of the fire pass upon you. Hath Omnipotence said it, and shall he not do it? Hath he promised it, and shall it not be accomplished? Let these promises serve to encourage you to persevere in the discharge of the duties of the Christian religion, and to arm you against all fear of persecution and affliction, *Be not afraid*, saith he who is your life, *of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear the Omnipotent he, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into, that dreadful place, hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* Hear the transporting promise which he makes, *Whosoever shall confess me before men, by suffering patiently for my sake, him will the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God.* And when they bring you into the synagogues, and to magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach in the same hour what ye ought to say; therefore, with the greatest magnanimity, you may suffer bodily affliction, seeing at last you shall be conquerors, and infinitely more

than conquerors under the great captain of your salvation. But for a more distinct knowledge of the believer's life,

I. WE shall enquire in what respect Christ is the believers life.

II. WHAT sort of life this is, or what are the properties of this life which the believer has in Christ.

III. MAKE some application from what may be said.

First, We shall enquire in what respect Christ is the believers life.—By Jesus Christ, the eternal word, were all things, whether in heaven or upon earth, in the waters, or under the earth, brought into existence: And without him was not any thing made that was made: His irresistible power and infinite wisdom brought into being the whole material and immaterial world, and hath to this present time, by succession, kept them from falling into nothing; he is the life of every thing that moveth, and the support of the whole world, * *In him we all live and move, and have our being*, saith the spirit

* Acts xvii. 28.

of truth. But this is not the life mentioned in the text ; he is the life of those mentioned by the famous harbinger of the gospel, *Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the will of God ;* of those who have experienced a second birth, whom the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant goodness and mercy, hath begotten again unto a lively hope, by the incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection of his only begotten and well beloved Son, and preserves by his almighty power through faith unto salvation. Of these in a particular manner he is the life : He is the spring and source from whence all their spiritual blessings flow ; he is the treasure from whence all their riches are derived, *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* * *And of his fulness have all we, who are of the household of faith, received, and grace for grace.* He is the stock or tree, from whence, like as many off-sets, they derive life, spring forth, grow up, flourish, and by the nourishment which they receive from him, they abound in fruitfulness, and bring forth a plentiful and loaded harvest. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ performs the character of husbandman ; he is daily and constantly sup-

* John i, 16.

porting them by clearer manifestations of himself, pruning them by some affliction or trying circumstance, and purging them by disappointments, in order to render them more fruitful.

CHRIST is the head, and they are the members; as the members without the head are dead and useless, so are they without Christ, *Without me, saith he, ye can do nothing.* From him as their head all true believers derive nourishment, life, and vigour to perform their several functions; and to him are they joined by the closest connection. He is the bridegroom, and they, as chaste virgins, are the bride, *Return, O backsliding daughter, for I am married unto you,* saith he whose name is Almighty. It is in this character that he pays them his love visits, and in his banqueting house, namely, the church, makes large displays to them of his goodness and love, and eats with them fat things full of marrow, and drinks upon wines on the lees well refined. Here they are encouraged and emboldened to engage trials and tribulations, and receive full assurance of strength and support from their glorious bridegroom. Now let the bloody sword of persecution be brandished before them; now let all the world conspire against them; let hills be removed, and

mountains be cast into the sea ; let the stars and the sun fall from their orbs, and let the universe be set in flames, and be all in one conflagration, nothing of all these can give them disturbance, yea, all of them together cannot give them the least discomposure ; for they are assured that omnipotence is on their side, who will be with them both now and evermore. But it may be objected, that many true and sincere Christians fall by the hands of cruel and bloody persecutors : And it may be enquired, what is the reason that he who is their life suffers the wicked to triumph over his own faithful servants. I grant that he, out of his unsearchable wisdom, sometimes permits infernal designs to be formed and executed against his people, so as to bring them to the place appointed for all mankind ; but is this a mark or sign that the Lord's arm is shortened that it cannot save, or of his ear being heavy that it cannot hear ? By no means ; observe the Lord God omnipotent himself, in awful words, answering this objection, and proclaiming his irresistible power, *Is my hand shortened, saith he, that it cannot redeem ? or have I no power to deliver ; behold, by my rebuke, by my word, I dry up the sea, that far extend and bottomless deep, I make the rapid rivers a wilderness : so that their fish*

stinketh, and is brought to loathsome corruption, *because there is no water*, to preserve them in life, *they*, in the boundless ocean, deprived of their element, *die of thirst*. *I clothe the bright azure heavens with blackness*, and *I make sackcloth their covering*. This objection proves the free will of man, and to what extremes cruel, savage, and wicked men will go, if not restrained by sovereign power. It proves also that God, for the good purposes of his will, permits the devil and wicked men to fill up the cup of their iniquity, by oppressing, afflicting, persecuting, and putting to death his chosen people, who have given them no offence. And in answer to the question, I say it proves, that he who is their life hath various ways of refining and purifying their affections, of rendering them dead to this world and its enjoyments, and of trying their fidelity. And it proves, that he who maketh all things work together in the most harmonious order, for his own glory and the good of his chosen, hath several ways of shortening the passage of his people, through the storms and tempests of this world, which hover over and roar around them incessantly, unto the desirable and glorious haven above, where the weary are at rest, and the troubled are at ease; where an uninterrupted calm and bright serenity

dwell^{eth} for evermore, *Fear none of those things which you shall suffer, saith the great Alpha and Omega, behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that your faith may be tried; and ye shall, that all your dross and tin may be purged away, have tribulation, for a small, a very small space of time, ten days; but be not dismayed. They that wait upon me shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint, neither be discouraged, My grace is sufficient for you, and my strength shall perfect your weakness: Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.* Therefore, saith the enraptured apostle of the Gentiles, I take pleasure in infirmities, however weak; in reproaches, however great; in necessities, however pressing; in persecutions, however cruel; and in distresses, however grievous, for Christ's sake, who is my life; for when I am weak, by reason of grievous oppressions from every quarter, then, by the powerful energy of the divine spirit, am I strong. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, or have no compassion on the fruit of her womb? Yes, she may, but the Lord shall never forget faithful and sincere Christians; his power is theirs to defend them from dangers, and support them under affliction;—nay, all that he is, and all that he*

hath is theirs, *All things*, saith the spirit of truth, by the apostle Paul, *are theirs ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are theirs ; for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* But, all the distinguished favours and inestimable blessings which true believers receive and enjoy from him who is their life, while they are in this world, are but as earnest of the great and glorious inheritance which he hath purchased, and reserved for them in the world to come ; all which they receive and enjoy here are but trifles, mere trifles in comparison of the real, the substantial riches which they shall possess in the superior mansions, where a chrystal stream of pleasure, in boundless fulness, flows for evermore.

BUT to describe more particularly what sort of a life this is belongs to the second thing proposed in the method, which is,

Secondly, To enquire what are the properties of this life.—It may be stiled a divine, heavenly, and glorious life ; it is the life of God in the soul of man, *We have*, saith Paul, *our conversation in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ.* This

life is free from those tormenting thoughts and anxious cares which attack the worldly and covetous; and of those stings of remorse, which, like so many voracious vultures, prey upon the vitals of the abandoned and wretched; and free from those tempestuous passions, which, like the troubled sea, rage impetuously in the breast of the wicked, and *throw nothing up but mire and dirt.* All but true believers are, saith Jude, *clouds without water, carried about with every wind of passion which may arise; trees, they are, whose fruit withereth not; nay, they are without fruit, no less than twice dead, and entirely pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame;* and to give you a brighter idea of the instability of their peace of mind, and of their future fate, he compares them to *wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* Dreadful thought! The life of believers in Christ is a pure ætherial calm; far above the reach of wild ambition, and those passions which so deform the world and torture men; instead of them, soft gales of passion play around their heart, and thereby form and stir it up to a livelier sense of joy; their hearts are dead to every despairing or anxious thought, but feelingly alive to every divine impression and act of humanity, *Pure religion, saith an in-*

spired apostle, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this ; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Their nature is divine, they are transformed into the likeness of God himself ; they feel for all that live, * *Exceeding great and precious promises are given unto them, saith Peter ; that by these they might be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust.*

It may be called a life of faith, *The just shall live by his faith, saith the prophet.* And saith the apostle of the Gentiles, *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

WHATEVER blessings true believers and sincere Christians may receive, and whatever advantages and privileges they may enjoy, they claim the purchase of none of them to themselves ; they attribute all to the unmerited goodness and mercy of the supreme disposer of all events. Upon the footing of their own righteousness or good actions they claim nothing ; they know, they assuredly know, that all their righteousness is but filthy rags, in comparison

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

of that glorious and immaculate robe with which they must appear in the presence of infinite purity and holiness in the awful day of accompts ; or be for ever debarred from the marriage supper of the Lamb, and sent into that dreadful place where the Lord hath eternally forgotten to be gracious ; therefore, by incessant prayer, they beg that they may be taken under the covert of imputed righteousness, which alone can introduce them into the presence of sovereign justice, and procure them a seat in the mansions of bliss. And they assuredly believe, that Jesus Christ, their life, is the gate to the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God : *I am the door, saith he, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* Faith is the key which opens heaven's treasure to them, and is the vessel which brings home to them all the precious jewels that they receive from the heavenly Canaan. By faith the gates of heaven are continually standing open, and pouring down blessings upon their head : Faith is the hand which lays hold upon all the promises which divine mercy hath, through the death of Christ, made unto fallen and perishing man ; these they lay hold upon, and can call their own, and can say with holy Job, in the full assurance

of faith, *Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ;* and that he is their rock, and the horn of their salvation. But though it is impossible to enumerate all the good things which faith procures them, yet that you may form a brighter idea, and have a more distinct knowledge of the wonderful, the passing wonderful effects of a well grounded faith, read the eleventh chapter of the epistle of Paul the apostle to the Hebrews. After you have perused it, you will find, that a true believer is almost omnipotence upon earth ; that to true faith nothing is impossible, *Verily I say unto you, faith our blessed Lord, if you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, speak but the word and it shall be done, command and it shall stand fast, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.* And as all things are possible by faith, so nothing which is either good or satisfactory can, without it, be attained, *If in this life only, faith a faithful apostle, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable ;* therefore the believer's life may be called a life of faith.

THE believer's life may be stiled an hidden

life ; *For ye are dead*, saith the apostle in the verse preceding the text, *and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

MANY a true disciple and faithful servant of Jesus Christ have, for many years, lived in sweet communion and fellowship with him, and have died in the fullest assurance of a blessed immortality, without the world's being acquainted with, or suspecting any such thing.

ALL true believers walk by faith, and not by sight. Pure religion and undefiled consisteth not in outward shew and ostentation, but in the secret, serious, and humble breathings of a broken, penitent, and obedient heart unto him who is the hearer of prayer, the acceptor of such services, and the bountiful giver of every good and perfect gift. So far, many a time, like the poor publican, are the true worshippers of God undiscoverable in their devotion, that their hearts are soaring aloft in holy desires, while their hands are hanging feebly down, and their eyes fixed on the earth, or perhaps upon some other object. And so far are they from pharisaical ostentation and parade, that often inward sighs and groans swallow up their words. God be merciful to me a

sinner, was all that self-abasement would allow the poor publican to utter, inward sighs and groanings which could not be uttered supplied the rest, *We*, saith Paul, *who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves*, mark what follows: How void of outward appearance! *groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.* Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. Nay, so secretly must the true acts of charity and devotion be performed, that the eternal word commandeth, in the giving of alms, *not to let the left hand know what the right hand doth; that thine alms may be done in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, to whom all things are naked and open in the darkest hour of night as at noon-day, himself shall reward thee openly.* And with regard to devotion he commandeth, saying, *When thou prayest, go not into the streets, or corners of the streets, nor even so much as stand in the temple, as do hypocrites, that they may be seen of men; but go into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, not with vain repetitions, as do the heathen, who think that they shall be heard on account of their*

much speaking; but let your words be the thoughts of your heart, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

It is the closet only, if it had ears to hear, a tongue to speak, and a mouth to utter, which can tell what that life is which many of the true believers have with God in Christ.

A BELIEVER'S life may be said to be hid as the effect in the cause. Believers have nothing whereof they can boast; it is from him that they receive whatever they possess or enjoy; his infinite mercy and goodness, and not any merit in them, granted them these privileges and enjoyments, and his justice, at pleasure, may deprive them of them all; and who, with a prevailing voice, can say unto him, *what dost thou?* or can the thing formed say unto him who formed it, *why didst thou make me so?* All their spiritual blessings and graces which distinguish them from the rest of the world, and which make them precious in his esteem, are his free donation, *By the grace of God, saith the apostle, I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain; for I laboured more abundantly than them all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

It may be said to be hid, as the way before a traveller upon which he hath never trode, *I am the way*, saith our blessed Lord, *no man can come to the Father, or to future felicity, but by me.* So long as the believer walks forward, and is supplied with seasonable refreshments from on high, so much is he nigher the end of his journey, but if he should give up, or be deprived of heavenly support, then all is over with him; the many difficult ascents which this way contains are too great to be surmounted by human efforts alone: If not assisted, perpetually assisted by heavenly manifestations and favours, back they must fall into the place from whence they began; and if they fall, they are in danger of being bruised so as never to recover, *When the unclean spirit, saith our Saviour, is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, but findeth none, he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then finding it in such a condition, goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, so they enter in and dwell there; and so they make the last state of that man worse than the first.* And saith the apostle, *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers*

of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Without me, saith our Lord, ye can do nothing.

SOMETIMES when the believer is, by the powerful energy of the divine spirit, raised upon an eminence in this way, he has a large view of it to a great distance, which leads him, in transport, to cry out and boast with the assured apostle, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? who is our way, Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are conquerors, and more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* But at other times, before they are aware, they are brought to the bottom of some apparently insurmountable precipice, where they can neither see nor advance further; their strength is gone, and their prospect is bounded on all quarters: Darknes sur-

rounds them, and horror stares them in the face, which forces them to cry out in these desponding words of the same apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.* But what heart-soothing and soul-ravishing words does the Lord God omnipotent say unto them, by the mouth of the evangelic prophet Isaiah, *Fear thou not, to go forward, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, on account of difficulties, for I am thy God: Mount up, for I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea, be not afraid of falling, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness, come up, I am before thee, I will hold thy right hand, till thou hast gained the summit of all thy doubts, saying unto thee, fear not; I will help thee, to wherever thou wouldst be.* Thus the believer's spiritual life may be said to be hid under the similitude of a way.

THE spiritual life of the believer may be said to be hid, as it is deposited in Christ's hand, or committed to his charge for safety and increase, like seed committed to an all-nourishing and fertile soil, "Those, saith he, whom thou hast, O righteous Father, given me, I have carefully kept, and not one of them is lost but the son of perdition." A deposition, however valuable, may (but especially by the failure, or falsity of the person to

whom it is entrusted) sometimes be of little or no advantage to the proprietor: And the seed, however strong and substantial, may, through the barrenness of the soil, be entirely lost, or, at most, return with small encrease, “ Some fell by the
“ way side,” saith our Lord, “ and the fowls
“ came and devoured them up: Some fell upon
“ stony places, where they had not much earth,
“ and forthwith they sprung up; because they
“ had no deepness of earth: And when the sun
“ was up they were scorched; and because they
“ had no root they withered away. And some
“ fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up,
“ so that they were entirely choked.” But this is not the case with Jesus Christ our Lord; he is a truly and ever-fertile soil, always sending forth to the believer new riches, sweet smiling blossoms, and thick-growing stalks, nay, even twin-growing stalks, which make his heart exult and triumph in the prospect of such a plentiful and heavy loaded harvest. But of the secret cause of all this he is altogether ignorant, “ The kingdom of God is,
“ as if a man should cast seed into the ground;
“ and should sleep, and rise night and day, and
“ the seed should spring, and grow up, he know-
“ eth not how;” the manner in which the believer’s blessings are conveyed unto him is very secret. The manner in which the Spirit of God

descends from on high, enters into, takes possession of, and operates in the soul of the true believer, is, either to others or to himself, altogether imperceptible, “ The wind bloweth where it listeth,” saith our great high priest, “ and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whether it goeth ; so is every one who is born of the spirit.”

THE holy psalmist, in the sweet experience of this life, addresseth him who is his life in these words, “ By lifting up the light of thy countenance upon me, thou hast, O Lord, put more gladness in my heart, than” the wicked ever experienced, “ at the time when their corn and their wine wonderfully encreased.” It is this union with Christ which gives a relish to all the Christian’s enjoyments, and renders the discharge of all the duties of his life perfectly agreeable ; the fresh supplies which he daily receives from on high make him go forward and wax strong in the Lord. “ The lion’s young may be hungry, and be utterly destitute of food, but they who sincerely seek the Lord shall want nothing which is good.” The purest and most refined honey is not more pleasant to the taste, nor does a sudden opening of light give a more agreeable sensation to the person bewildered and perplexed in midnight darkness, than

the operation of the divine spirit, upon the soul, gives to the true believer. Nay, the former of these, by repetition or continuance, grows quite insipid, and palls upon the sense; and the latter, by too much intensity, becomes disagreeable, painful, and extremely dangerous to the sight. But the agency of the divine spirit, in the soul of sincere Christians, neither cloyes by repetition, nor is dangerous in excess; the more he tastes of the heavenly manna and bread of life, the more he desires. They are incessantly aiming at nearer and more intimate communion and fellowship with him who is their life, and meditating upon what may most conduce to his honour and glory, *O how I love I thy law*, saith the psalmist; *it is my meditation all the day*. As to be perfect is an attribute of the Supreme Being, so, to be so likewise, as far as his frailty will permit, is all the believer's desire. But this panting and longing after perfection is altogether free of torment and anxiety, nay, they are attended with the greatest pleasure and joy; Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden is light." The true Christian, in the discharge of those duties which the wicked esteem an oppressive load, finds particular joy!

AT sacramental occasions. *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among*

the sons ; I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love. If we think ourselves honoured, and rejoice in being placed, as welcome guests, at the table of a great man or prince ; and if we are proud in being made his companions, how much greater occasion have they who are placed at the table, partake of the dainties, and made the companions of the great sovereign of heaven and earth, before whom we are all as grasshoppers? The psalmist rejoiced when it was said unto him, “ Go up into the house of the Lord ;” yea, so highly did he esteem God’s house, that he said he would “ rather be a door-keeper there, “ than dwell in the most magnificent palace replete with wickedness.” He envied the very sparrows and swallows which had made it their habitation to bring forth their young. A day in the courts of the Lord’s house he esteemed better than a thousand elsewhere, “ How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. Blessed is the man “ who trusteth in them.”

BUT the true Christian finds much joy also in prayer. “ This poor man cried unto the Lord, “ and he heard him, and delivered him out of all “ his troubles. Those,” saith the Lord, “ who keep

“ my sabbaths aright, and take hold of my covenant ; even them will I bring into my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer : Their sacrifices and their burnt-offerings shall be accepted upon mine altar.”

Prayer is the key, I say, which opens heavens gates to the believer : The Lord makes large discoveries of himself to believers in prayer, which makes them exult and triumph. Prayer is the life, the strength, and support of the Christian, “ Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you ; ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” What a pleasing emotion did David feel arising in his heart, when he exclaimed, “ O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is a great God, and a great king above all gods.”

THE believer's life is pleasant *in praise*. “ Who-so offereth me praise,” saith the Lord, “ glorifieth me, and I will shew him my salvation.” The believer's heart is highly elevated in this heavenly exercise, “ I will sing unto the Lord,” saith Moses, “ for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation.” In this most agreeable

exercise he rejoices, because it places him, as it were, in heaven, while he is upon earth; and because it fits him for the enjoyment of that blessed place, where hallelujahs for ever sound: "Praise is comely for the upright in heart. Praise the Lord with harp: Sing unto him with the psaltery, and upon an instrument of ten strings." And because of its sweets, which he experienced, he dwells upon it, and repeats the exhortation, "Sing unto him a new song: Play skilfully with a loud noise." Yea, so pleasant and delightful did he find it, that he says, "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall be in my mouth continually."

LET us next observe them in their *meditation*. When dangers and death surround and beset them on every side, so, as that to flesh and blood they appear to be immediately overwhelmed, yet are they not in the least discomposed; for the "River which rises out of the fountain beside the throne of God," and which, in its progress, maketh glad the city of our God, and the inhabitants thereof," enters their breasts, and makes them rejoice, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul. We will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried in-

“ to the midst of the sea ; though the waters there-
 “ of roar and be troubled, though the mountains
 “ shake with the swelling thereof, for God is our
 “ refuge and our strength, a very present help in
 “ time of trouble. I will sing unto the Lord as
 “ long as I live : I will sing praise to my God
 “ while I have my being. My meditation of him
 “ shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord.”
 Thus we see how sweet, delightful, and pleasant
 the believer’s life is.

It may be stiled a *profitable* and *soul-enriching*
life ; for it is by their union with Christ that they
 are adorned with the gifts and graces of the spirit,
 which render them more valuable than their breth-
 ren, and it is by it that they are ripened for fu-
 ture happiness, “ For thou art the glory of their
 “ strength, and in thy favour our horn shall be
 “ exalted. I will make him my first born, high-
 “ er than the kings of the earth. The Lord will
 “ give grace, and he will give glory, and he will
 “ with-hold no good thing from those who walk
 “ uprightly. It is life eternal to know thee the
 “ only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou
 “ hast sent.”

Thirdly, To make some application.

SINCE then Christ is the believers life, both

here and hereafter, how can they expect to be received into life eternal, who are strangers to him, and far off from him by nature? who hath, neither by purity of heart, nor holiness of life, studied a near conformity to the simple and plain character of the true Christian, or rather the pattern he copies, Christ Jesus; whilst, on the other hand, the believer, by the wisdom he hath received from above, and by the virtuous dispositions and pious exercises of the soul, is manifesting himself to be the Son of God; and as a branch which deriveth life from the vine, so the believer receiveth nourishment from Christ who is his life.

THERE can be no real wisdom without unfeigned piety: However enlightened and lively the understanding and imagination of the wicked may appear, yet, their hearts being replete with the unfruitful works of darkness, can be called nothing but honourable fools, and in the end they shall be found to be fools and madmen, *As far as heaven is above the earth, so far is the wisdom of the just above that of the wicked.* True wisdom is a plant which grows upon too great an eminence, to be reached and pulled by him who hath no knowledge of a God in Christ. The world, which so engrosses the attention of the covetous man, appears as nothing to the true believer; for he knows, and is assured

of a treasure, the least grain of which far exceeds all the gold of the east. As long as David judged of the seeming partiality in the dispensations of providence, with respect to the righteous and the wicked, according to the suggestions of a carnal mind, he was at a great loss to vindicate divine justice; but as soon as he turned his attention to, and conversed with him who is the fountain of all wisdom and perfection, he then learned the end of wickedness and the reward of holiness. The true believer is full of that wisdom which is from above, which maketh the simple wise.

As the life of the true believer is so sweet, glorious, and excellent, let us all endeavour through faith, and by repentance, and by living a holy life, seek the love of God, and to follow the example of such a noble guide as the believing Christian. Let this noble emulation, let this noble ambition fire your minds, despising the world and all its vanities, seek after heaven with all its substantial joys, that whatever life you may live, you may live unto the Lord; and when you come to die, he may acknowledge you as his; to live so, as that when Christ who is your life shall appear, ye also may appear with him in glory, and be received into those mansions of glory and blessing, which he hath gone before to prepare for all those who love him in sincerity and in truth.

S E R M O N IV.

P R O V E R B S iii. 6.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

THIS book is justly called Solomon's proverbs, because it was mostly and chiefly wrote by him; and because of those excellent sentiments, aphorisms, or adages of which it is composed. It is chiefly made up of incoherent and independent sentences, like a boxfull of precious stones, or jewels that have no contexture, or dependance upon each other: The main scope of this book is, to instruct men in the way to true wisdom, to know God's will, and sincerely to fear and regard him.

Some think Solomon pen'd this book in his more ripe and manly years, because at that period his genius and prudence were most quick and agile, but withal grave, settled, and solid. The whole of this book, however, was not pen'd by Solomon, for the 30th chapter was pen'd by Agur, the son of Jakeh, and some other chapters were the advice and words of other people. A sincere obedience, and regard to God's commandments, together with a lively faith and steady dependance upon him, is the duty of every one that professeth the name of Christ; this is the purport, the chief design and intent of Solomon, from the beginning of this chapter to the 7th verse, to advise men to observe these great duties of obedience, and to believe upon the Lord. The former of these he adviseth to in the first four verses, "My son forget not my law, but let thy heart keep my commandments." My law, that is, God's law; it might be called his law, as the gospel is called Paul's gospel, "Christ was raised from the dead, according to my gospel," *i. e.* that gospel which he preached. And the latter he exhorts to in the 5th and 6th verses, "Trust in the Lord, &c. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths;" these are the words I purpose to insist upon, which contain in them more generally these two things.

THE advice and exhortation of David to Solomon, “ In all thy ways acknowledge God.”

IN all thy designs and undertakings, either for the things of this life or of the next, acknowledge him ; or, as others render it, know, or own him, follow his counsels, obey his commandments, submit to his providence, depend upon his promises, —so act in all thy ways.

THE reward and encouragement that is promised, “ And he shall direct thy paths ;” As if he had said, if you will but own and acknowledge God, you must pray unto him, depend upon him, submit unto him ; and upon your doing so, you may rely upon the fulfilment of this promise, that he will *direct your paths* ; will bless and prosper all your endeavours, will crown them with success, and will keep you from the ways of sin, and from the paths of the destroyer, and of destruction itself : His spirit shall influence your hearts, and, by acknowledging the Lord, he shall direct your ways. These words being thus divided and explained, I observe, That they who would have their paths directed by God, must in all their ways acknowledge him, as the acknowledging or owning of God is the only way to receive direction from him, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

IN discoursing from these words, I shall observe the following method.

I. *SHEW* what are the ways we ought to acknowledge God in.

II. How we ought to acknowledge God in these ways.

III. *WHY* we should acknowledge him.

IV. *WHAT* is supposed in having our paths directed by God.

V. *APPLY*.

THE words thus laid down, I return to the first thing proposed, which was,

FIRST, To shew what are the ways we ought to acknowledge God in.—We ought to acknowledge God in the way of our commanded duty. His commandments are such, that it is our indispensable duty to obey them, and it is our great advantage to regard them, to yield a sincere obedience, and a respect to all God's holy laws and commandments ; and in doing so we acknowledge God's wisdom in contriving and making these laws, his right to rule and govern us, his mercy and

goodness in rewarding those that obey him, his justice in punishing others that disregard and disobey them; in acknowledging God this way, by obeying his commandments we are entitled to a blessing, and by disobeying them we are liable to a curse, *A blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God.—And a curse if you will not obey them, &c.* It has been the practice of the people of God to acknowledge him this way, and none more eminently than the psalmist David, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have a respect to all thy commandments.*

WE ought to acknowledge God in the ways of his providential disposals. These are God's ways so far as he sees fit to deal with us, they are our ways, in so much as we are the persons that lye under such different circumstances, yet in all these we ought to acknowledge God, and say, *the will of the Lord be done*: This ought to be a special article in our prayers, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*; whether it is his preceptive, or providential will, we should be content. I shall mention some of God's providences towards us that we should acknowledge him in.

IN *prosperity*. In such a time as this, upon the recital of such favours, the greatest and best ac-

knowledgments ought to be paid to our bountiful benefactor.

HAVE we received favours? then let us regard God's hand in bestowing them upon us: Are we at any time delivered from dangers, and established in a prosperous condition? let us know that it is God that does it for us; let us acknowledge in such a time as this, as the psalmist David did, *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up.*

GOD had raised the psalmist to a high pitch of honour and dignity; he had delivered him from his foes, and established him in his kingdom, and given him prosperity and plenty in great measure; therefore, in this state, and in these circumstances, the psalmist thought it his entire duty to acknowledge the Lord, by extolling of him in all his deliverances from trouble, and in his prosperity he confesses the Lord to be the “uplifter of his head.”

IN *adversity*. Sometimes God is pleased to exercise his people this way, which he does sometimes as a punishment upon them for their former follies, as he did with David; at other times he does it to try their faith in him, their dependance upon him, their faithfulness and

steadfastness to him and his ways, and thus he dealt with Job. Yet in affliction we should submit, as Job did, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." This is a virtue proper only for Christians, to bless the name of the Lord in adversity; and it is the way to have afflictions removed, thus to acknowledge God: We should, in such adverse circumstances, follow the example of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." This is such a submission (which is an acknowledgement) as is due, and ought to be had and given by us to such a great God as we have to do with, we should not be too earnest in being delivered from afflictions, least it should not be God's will at that time to relieve us.

In a *private capacity* we ought to acknowledge God. It is not God's will that every one should be publicly employed in; if it were so that all were alike concerned, there should be no difference betwixt masters and servants, betwixt ministers and hearers; but some are more privately employed than others, yet even they, in that private state, ought to acknowledge God:

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Joshua's servants were to serve the Lord as well as himself; "But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Those of his house that were in a private capacity were to acknowledge God, by serving of the Lord.

IN a more *public* and *stated capacity*: We ought also to acknowledge God by seeking his direction, acting under his protection, promising to serve him in that more public capacity as Joshua did in that scripture before mentioned. David also does thus acknowledge God's hand, although he was advanced to a royal dignity; and, for the favours he had received, he promises to love the Lord, "I will love the Lord my strength." "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and deliverer; my God my strength, in whom I will trust," &c. Although David was in a very public station, yet he thinks it no dishonour to acknowledge God, but, on the contrary, he boasts in him as his God and his deliverer, in the 50th verse of the last mentioned psalm: He knew that although he was the possessor of great privileges and benefits, yet God was the principal proprietor, and had the best right and title both to them and him; and that God was the uplifter of his head, and therefore upon every occasion he acknowledges him.

IN *intricate and difficult matters* we should acknowledge God. Sometimes the way of the people of God is as if it were hedged about, that they know not which way to go, whether to turn to the right hand or the left; and, like Job, they are made to cry out, "He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths." Yet even in such a case as this we ought not to forget God, but acknowledge his right to dispose of us and our affairs as he sees fit, for this is the way to be delivered out of those difficulties that are like so much miry clay, "I waited patiently for the Lord," saith the psalmist, "and he inclined unto me; he brought me out of the miry clay,"

In *matters which human abilities cannot accomplish* we should acknowledge God. Sometimes the people of God are in his providence brought into such a situation, that they are obliged to say with the apostle Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" but never more need have they of a borrowed and derived help than upon such occasions; and surely acknowledgments can never be more suitable than at such times, when vain is the help of man: This has been an argument in the mouth of the saints, to move

God to hear them: David was very earnest with God to help him, “ Give us help from
“ trouble, for vain is the help of man.”

SECOND, How we ought to acknowledge God in these ways.

WE ought to acknowledge God by praying to him; this is a duty that the light of nature teacheth us, but which revealed religion in a more special manner enjoins us, and that which hath been the constant and commendable practice of the people of God: The psalmist David is an eminent example of this, “ Evening and
“ morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry
“ aloud; and he shall hear my voice.” By praying unto God we acknowledge that there is such a being as a God. Practical atheists there are too many; such who do not pray unto God, —such who wish there were no God, as the psalmist says of the foolish person, “ The fool has
“ said in his heart there is no God:” But as practical atheists is evidenced by not praying unto God, so praying unto him, and calling upon him, is a special demonstration of our acknowledging that there is such a being as a God. The psalmist David owns this, when he says, “ O my
“ soul, thou hast said unto the Lord thou art my

“ Lord.” Where he does not only acknowledge that there is such a being as a God, but at the same time owns his propriety in this Lord, “ Thou art my Lord.”

By praying unto him we acknowledge his omniscience ; that he knows our very thoughts as well as our actions ; that he is the searcher of the heart, as we have it recorded in David’s exhortation to his son Solomon, “ And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind ;” for the Lord searcheth the hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. We own his omniscience, by our praying to him as Peter did, “ Lord, thou knowest all things ;” by praying unto God we make our appeal unto him, and lay our case before him, that we are persuaded he hears our cry, and knows our request, if we are not fully persuaded of his omniscience, we do not come unto him, nor entertain these conceptions of him we ought to do, and that are really compatible to an infinitely perfect Being.

By *praying* unto him we acknowledge his omnipotency, that he is able to help us. To what purpose would it be for us to call upon God, or pray unto him, if we were not fully persuaded of

this : 'This the psalmist David very frankly and frequently acknowledges, " Who is the king of glory? the Lord strong and mighty :—Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee ?" We, by praying unto him, own that the Lord Omnipotent reigneth, and his people rejoice and are glad, " * And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude ; and as the voice of many waters ; and as the voice of mighty thunders ; saying, Allelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth ;" this is an acknowledging of him, when he is far exalted above all creatures in our conceptions of him. By praying unto God we acknowledge all his attributes, that he is infinitely perfect, that he is from eternity to eternity God, Infinitely holy, unchangeable, wise, merciful, just, and good ; we acknowledge that which he says of himself, " I am the Alpha and the Omega," &c. Sometimes they acknowledge him as the psalmist David, " I will sing of mercy and of judgment unto thee O Lord ;" this was David's ditty, composed of mercy and justice, the brightest stars in the sphere of majesty. We should acknowledge God by blessing him for mercies. The least regard that we can have to our neighbours for the recital of favours is

* Rev, xix. 6.

to be thankful for them ; and shall we then receive mercies from the hand of God and not bless and praise his name ? seeing this is an acknowledging of his favours, “ Whofo offereth praise glorifieth me.” Of all men an ungrateful person is the worst. Ingratitude is the worst of faults ; gratitude includes many duties, and much obedience : The psalmist David was as expressive of his acknowledging God this way as any, “ Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not his benefits ;” this is that which Moses exhorted the children of Israel, to “ acknowledge God. “ * When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee ;” this is a debt of gratitude as well as of justice, solemnly to praise God for his mercies ;—but it is an acknowledgement that the more unworthy and absurd do too commonly neglect and despise : Altho’ they profess to believe a God and his providence, from whom all their comforts come, yet they grudge to own him at their meals, either by begging his blessing before, or by offering praise after.

By submitting to God’s hand in afflictions, this

* Deut. viii. 10.

is a believing that God is righteous in all his actions, and it is an acknowledging of his right to do with us as he pleases. We should say with Job, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil;"—shall we not receive the chastisement of our iniquity? accept it patiently, improve thankfully and fruitfully, and acknowledge God in afflictions as his people did, "O Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." By prayer, humiliation, and submission, we ought to acknowledge God in afflictions; when his judgments are upon the earth, we, the inhabitants of it, should endeavour to learn righteousness: And in our afflictions we should seek him early; there is no better way of being delivered from them than this. We should acknowledge him, by acting in all circumstances and conditions of life, we should not only endeavour to please him ourselves, but also we ought, as much as in us lie, in our proper spheres and places, to act for him, his interest and cause. And not only in times of adversity and affliction should we act for him, for then it may be afflictions may make us more earnest to serve him; but even in prosperity we should not forget God, his cause, or interest, when we shall have more power, and be in a greater and better capacity to

serve him and act for him. How active was Joshua for God! and how much ought we to propose him as a pattern to copy after. Now, therefore, "fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; &c." "But as for me and my house, &c." There we may see how active this good man was for God and his interest; not only by promising for himself and his house that they should serve the Lord, but also by inciting others to fear and serve him. And saith Paul, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

THIRD, Why we should acknowledge him.

WE should acknowledge God and own him in all our ways, because he has the best right and title to us.—That which a person has the best right unto, it is but reasonable that he should possess and enjoy it; shall we then dishonour God our sovereign Lord by not acknowledging him? shall we endeavour to dispossess him of that right he has to us? a fault so very criminal, that we should not be allowed to act so towards our neighbour; we should give to God the things that are his, as well as to Cæsar these that are his. When they rendered to Cæsar his due they did him but right, they helped him to what was his own, it was that which he might justly require and demand: So

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when we acknowledge God, we do but own him that has the best right and title to us; and shall we be more backward in giving God his due this way by acknowledging him, than others are forward in rendering to Cæsar the things that are his. God has a right to us many ways.

HE has a right to us by *creation*. He made us and not we ourselves, and thus all flesh is God's. He is the common Creator of all things; but man in his creation was in a special manner taken notice of by God: He was pleased to make him after his own image. That God has a right to us this way is very plain from scripture, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it, they are wholly my creatures," and therefore at my disposal; and thus the Lord himself is pleased to let us know, "Even every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him." This should be one of the strongest arguments to persuade us to acknowledge him, because we are his own, and he has a right by creation to us, "Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the Father."

By *preservation*. It is in him that we live, move and have our being: Not only had we our lives

from him, but those means whereby our lives are sustained, and our natures supported, are also wholly from him. He is not only the God of our life, but the length of our days also: He is not only the author of our lives, but the preserver of them also; "he upholdeth all things by the word of his power;" he taketh care of all, and upholdeth every thing. If he should do otherwise, and require us to shift for ourselves, how soon should we moulder into our primitive and first nothing? and therefore, because it is owing to his word and power that we are supported and preserved, he has the best right and title to us, and ought to be acknowledged by us; for without him we could not so much as live for a moment, such is the continual influence that we receive from him, and the dependance we have upon him. He is the preserver of man and beast.

By *redemption*. Christ Jesus our blessed Saviour was the great gift of the Father to fallen man; he came into the world to seek and to save poor lost and undone sinners; and this he did, that he might redeem a people to himself, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The apostle tells us, that we were not sent into this

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world merely to serve our own purposes, or to pursue our own ends; no, but that our life should be spent in doing good, in being zealous for God, in acknowledging and owning the great gift of God, our Redeemer, who, by virtue of that redemption, may lay a special claim and title to us. His blood was of more worth than the whole world, his merits and intercession are of greater force than any thing else; and shall we be so ungrateful, we who are sharers in the benefits of his death, as not to acknowledge him who laid down his life for us all.

HE has a right to us by our own *self-dedication*. God, before we gave ourselves to him in covenant, had a right to us, for he is the common Creator and Preserver of all his creatures; but when we make a voluntary surrender of ourselves to be his, we then make that which formerly was our duty the matter of our choice; we then lie under a superadded and stronger obligation than ever to acknowledge him. Have not many of us, with the psalmist David, sworn unto the Lord that we will keep all his righteous judgments, and to do them; and by this very oath we give away, as it were, ourselves unto the Lord, by a more acknowledged right than ever. Many of us have said as the Israelites did of old, “ And the people said unto

“ Joshua, the Lord our God will we serve, and
“ his voice we will obey,” and upon our doing so
the Lord becomes our God in covenant, “ So shall
“ ye be my people, and I will be your God.”
Seeing then we transfer this right, and make a
full assignment and resignation of ourselves to
God, it tends to shew, that as it is our duty, so
we testify that we are not ungrateful and unmind-
ful of former benefits.

WE should acknowledge God, because he *en-joins* and *commands* us so to do. The words of the text is very plain to this purpose, “ Commit thy
“ works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be
“ established.” If God commands us, how can we refuse to obey? shall we slight and suspend God’s authority, to procure and promote our own ruin? these necessarily follow if we do so. God’s commandments is very plain, “ And thou Solo-
“ mon my son, know thou the God of thy fa-
“ ther, and serve him with a perfect heart, and
“ with a willing mind.”

WE should acknowledge God, *because there is none other God besides him*: He is ~~the~~ *the only living and true God*. Men may imagine and frame gods to themselves, who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, hands and handle not: But these are all

vain and foolish idols ; our God is infinitely above such comparison, his eyes go to and fro beholding the evil and the good ; he hears the prayers and cries of his people, and is graciously pleased to support and deliver them : There is none like unto God, none so great, none so faithful, none so eternal ; he is not only living, but everliving, or everlasting, and life-giving ; there is none like him, none in the least can be compared unto him, “ To whom shall we go but unto him, for he has the words of eternal life.” He will not give his glory to another, nor his honour to graven images ; he is the Lord that is infinitely merciful : And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, “ The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” All religious worship and adoration ought to be paid unto him and to no other.

FOURTH, What is supposed or implied by having our paths directed by God.

It supposes that we are apt to go out of the way we should walk in ; if it were not so, to what purpose would it be to have our paths directed ? “ They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick ;” they that have

light in themselves have no need of a borrowed one to direct and guide them ; but experience, as well as revealed religion, tells us we are apt to go astray, and therefore we had need of a sure guide : “ The carnal mind is enmity to God,” it is prone to evil, and averse to good : We are not only liable to wander from good, but have in a great measure forsaken God, the “ fountain of living waters.”

It supposes, in the next place, that the way we ought to walk in is not so plain and easy, nor without difficulties, as that direction is not necessary. If the way we were to walk in was not attended with innumerable difficulties, what need would there be of the expression of the psalmist, “ Lead me O Lord in thy righteousness, make thy way straight before my face ; lead me that I stumble not : Make the way I am to walk in plain and level, that I may walk and not be weary, run and not be faint.”

It supposes also that God is of infinite wisdom, he knows how to extricate us out of difficulties, he knows how to direct us in duties : If it were not so that he was infinitely wise, how could our paths be directed ? carnal wisdom could never direct them aright, but an infinite wisdom is necessa-

ry. God's directing us therefore, supposes, that he is endowed with all possible perfection, a God of infinite wisdom, "To the only wise God be glory, through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." Here poor Christians may cast an anchor, and be safe in the wisdom of God.

It supposes, in the last place, great condescension, that such an infinitely wise God should stoop so very low as to direct poor sinful worms, empty and vain dust and ashes; should we not think it great condescension in a king to descend from his throne, and to direct a poor man in the way to any house or city; but much more so in the Divine Being, to direct such as we are in the right road to happiness, it hightens the condescension to consider him as an infinite God. He even entreats us to follow him, he argues the case with us, "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" What sweet, what refreshing words, that God will thus comfort and encourage us, and so far condescend, as to direct us who are wandering from him; this is a condescension and a love that is not after *the manner of men!*

FIFTH, Make some application.

Is it so, that it is the duty of every one to acknowledge God? Then here is just ground of reproof to those who do not acknowledge him. There are a great many people in the world who profess to believe there is a God, but in works deny him, being “abominable and disobedient, “and unto every good work reprobates.” The apostle is here speaking of the Jews who professed to know and believe one living and true God, but they lived as so many atheists, as if there were no God in the world: They neither praise, pray, nor obey him; such are justly reproveable, and should be abominated by all good men. The apostle speaks of such “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such “turn away:” They profess to own God, but never acknowledge him; they are like hollow trees in an old wood, tall, but sapless, have a fair outside, but within are unsound. They act as if religion were a comedy, do in voice and gesture mimic divine duties, but in their hearts renounce them. They are as hypocrites who only make a fair shew of religion and devotion, while nothing of real acknowledgments to the author of their being is to be found amongst them.

TRY whether you have been acknowledging

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God in your ways or not ; reflect on your former lives, review your past actions, see whether this has been your practice : Try what your present conduct is, what you are doing : Do you acknowledge God in all your ways ? do you obey his precepts, submit to his providences, depend upon his promises ? if we act thus, then we may have good ground to expect direction from him.

TRY what your resolutions are with respect to the remainder of your life : Are you resolved to acknowledge God in all you do ? then you may depend upon the fulfilment of the promise, for “ he is faithful that has promised.”

Is it so that God is ready to direct his people upon their acknowledging of him ? then here is matter of the greatest encouragement to true believers, they who sincerely own God ; their prayers are not an abomination unto the Lord, but on the contrary, he hears their cries, he grants their requests, he gives them his direction, “ The
“ righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of his troubles ;” these are favours that are not restricted to one particular person, but they are common to the righteous upon their crying, or praying unto him. God is pleased sometimes to withhold and delay a special answer to the particular requests of his people, for

reasons best known to infinite wisdom ; but although it is so, yet it is matter of comfort and rejoicing to them that he will not always be unmindful of them, but in a proper and suitable time he will direct them ; he will pour in the oil of his grace into these broken vessels, whose hearts retain not their sins any longer, but pours them out as “ water before the Lord.”

LET all be exhorted and advised sincerely to acknowledge God. Let us commit our hearts, our lives, our ways, and all unto him : This is the psalmist’s advice, “ Commit thy way unto the Lord : Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.”

IT is not an hypocritical profession that will denominate us true Christians. Bodily exercises and labour avail little or nothing ; we must, if we would expect to have the character of real Christians, practise what we profess, if we look for direction from him. Consider the advantage that accrues to those that thus acknowledge God ; he will “ direct their paths.” There are favours included in this direction that might move any to the performance of the enjoined duty : Through his direction difficulties will be made easy, crooked paths will be straight, dark souls will receive light, and dead hearts enjoy life : If thou seek him he

will be found ; found to direct thee to hear, and to help thee. Consider the disadvantages that attend those that disown God, “ If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” Is not this an intolerable thought ? Can we think of an eternal separation from God, without being struck with horror and amazement ; if there were no greater punishment attending sin than this everlasting departure, this incomparable loss, it might move to a daily and sincere obedience. Consider this has been the constant and commendable practice of the people of God to acknowledge him. The more early ages of the church, as well as latter days, afford us abundant instances to this purpose : Abraham prayed, and God healed Abimelech ; Moses prayed for the people when the serpent bit them, “ * And they prayed, and said, “ thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all “ men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.” The practice of the apostle should influence us to such performances, upon the like occasions, if ever we expect to have God’s direction in them. The direction of the wise man ought to induce us all to acknowledge God, if we expect to have our paths directed by him ; for “ in all thy ways,” says he, “ acknowledge God, “ and he shall direct thy paths.”

* Acts i. 24.

S E R M O N V.

J O H N iii. 16.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I N the beginning of this chapter we have a discourse betwixt Christ and Nicodemus concerning *regeneration*, where the latter discovers his ignorance about that work ; that our blessed Saviour reproves him for, and instructs him about it. From the 14th verse, and downwards, our blessed Saviour points out himself to be the Saviour of sinners, as he was typified by the brazen serpent, and was sent by the Father for that end, and

shews us the way whereby we can only be saved, and that is, by faith, "That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The words of the text come in, as a further illustration of this doctrine that our blessed Saviour is insisting on; viz. the proving of himself to be the Messiah, the Saviour of sinners; this is evident from the particle, *for*, "For God so loved the world," &c. In these words we have three things particularly to be regarded,

WE have the *primary cause*, the principal source and fountain of mans salvation, viz. the love of God, "For God so loved the world." Man, by the fall, had brought ruin and misery upon himself, but was not capable of finding a way for his recovery; then God, out of his free love, found out the new and the living way. He might have left us to have been damned, and might have punished us with the sentence of death in its largest extent; but "God loved the world," therefore found out a way for mans recovery. The objects of redeeming love here called the world, seem to be confined only to believers, as in the latter clause of the verse, "that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ's

death, with respect to the salvation of sinners, seems no further to be extended than where faith is inherent and duly exercised.

WE have *God's love* commended in the person by whom alone we can be saved, "That he gave his only begotten Son." The person who is our Saviour is the Son of God, "there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved." He it is that is "altogether lovely," and he is the person that we are this day to commemorate; his death we are to shew forth until he come; it is that which we are sacramentally to behold in the cymbels of bread and wine. God's love is wonderfully distinguished and commended in these words, 'for he is not only the Son, but the only begotten Son of God.' It is much for a man to part with a faithful servant: To part with a Son, an only Son, and an heir too, is the effect of distinguishing love. He gave this Son: If God could have received any thing as a requital for this love token and great gift, then the contrivance had not been so admirable, nor the gift so valuable; but God commends his love, in that he freely gave his "only begotten Son."

WE have the end of God's giving Christ to

the world, "That whosoever believeth in him
 "should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 Here there are three things to be taken notice
 of:

THE way whereby this happiness is to be obtained is *by believing*. It is the believing soul that lays hold on Christ Jesus, "He that believeth shall be saved." In our believing in the Son of God, we must give our understandings assent to the gospel truths, and our wills consent to the gospel terms: We must not only believe that Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, but we must heartily embrace and receive him upon his own terms; and whoever it is that does thus believe in him, whether he be rich or poor, bond or free, man or woman, master or servant, son or daughter, that even that person shall "not perish, but have everlasting life." He shall not perish, such a one shall not be drowned in the depth of sin and misery, his portion shall not be with unbelievers; he shall not utterly and eternally be undone, but have everlasting life. The sum of these words are, that God the Father has, in the most wonderful manner, distinguished his love, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and that whoever believe in him shall be saved.

• It is the former part of this verse that we purpose to insist upon, as it seems to comprehend the full sense of the whole.

THAT God, in giving of his Son to be the Saviour of sinners, affords us the greatest demonstration of love.

HIS love for the world is without a parallel,
* *For greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* This was a commendation of Christ's love; for whatever was done by him in the testimony of his love to sinners, was first contrived by God; he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever "believes" in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We did not love God first, he loved us, and gave his Son to the death for us.

WITH a firm reliance upon divine aid, we shall endeavour to prosecute the following method.

I. To consider the nature of this love.

II. VIEW the end of this gift, or of God's giving his Son for sinners.

III. MAKE some improvement of the whole.

* John xv. 13,

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FIRST, *God so loved the world.* This was a free and undeserved love. The eternal God, in his infinite wisdom, found out this new and living way for mans recovery, without the consideration of the foresight of faith and holiness. It must have been free love, if we consider there was nothing, nor could there be any thing in Adam's lost posterity, that could move God to set his love on us: What is said with respect to God's love to Israel, may properly be applied in this case, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." It is a free love that God has bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus: It cannot be said of us as the disciple said of the Centurion, "he is worthy for whom thou shouldst do this;" we are not only undeserving, but ill-deserving sinners. If God had viewed us from his prescience, or foresight of what we should be, he had seen us miserable and wretched, our case forlorn and hopeless; but then he, in the freedom of his love, provided his Son to be a Saviour; which love is manifested to be the free gift of God, without any constraint or forceable consideration. Christ the gift to sinners is also called the free gift, "We were wallowing in our blood," and in this situation God considered us, and even then "spread his skirt over us, and covered our nakedness." Here is a clear demonstration of free love.

It is a *great and wonderful love*. If duly considered, we will find a matchless and an inexpressible testimony of love and affection, and in the most elevated and pathetic expressions; where it is said, “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God !” This may fill us with amazement, and be more admired than comprehended; and those who have an interest in it will see more of the greatness of it, than others that are less acquainted with it. The greatness of this love will further appear, if we consider the person or subject loving, *viz.* God, “ God so loved the world.” That same God that was provoked by mans disobedience—that God that stands in no need of mans help to make him more happy than he is, he it is that loved us, and gave his Son to be a sacrifice for us.—That God who is a God of infinite purity and holiness; He is the searcher of the hearts, and the tryer of the reins of the children of men; who is holy, just, and good; who is righteous in all his actions, is wonderful and astonishing!

THE person, or objects loved. Poor fallen man, sinful dust and ashes, that did not, nor could love God: That he should so love us, as to give his Son for us, is what should make us stand in ad-

miration and astonishment, when we cannot fully conceive it, “ Herein is love ; not that we loved “ God, but that he loved us,” we that had nothing in us to recommend us to mercy, save our misery ; nothing worthy of love appearing in ourselves, farther than that we were miserable ; That a just and holy God should take notice of such is wonderful ; and not only was there nothing in us to recommend us to the love of God, but we were enemies to him also, aliens to the “ common-wealth of Israel,” strangers to the “ covenant of promise,” without “ God and hope in “ the world.” Here is a greater testimony of love than ever was shewn : Greater than Jonathan’s and David’s ! greater than Ruth’s and Naomi’s ! greater than David’s and Absalom’s !

CONSIDER the person that was the Father’s gift to mankind. Here we may be lost in the consideration of this matchless and unparalleled love. That God should give his Son to be the Saviour of sinners, to be so vilified and maltreated by men, not only by adoption, but by an ineffable generation ; a Son of the same essence with the Father ; a Son that was the Father’s equal ! a Son that never displeased his Father ! an only Son ! a Son that was heir of all things ! If he had been an adopted Son, God might have as freely return-

ed him as he received him. If his Son had displeased him, then to have given him chastisement would not have been so much taken notice of; but this is the demonstration of unparalleled love, that God should part with his only begotten Son, that so we might live and never die, * *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.* God spared not his own Son: God's only Son must go and suffer rather than the elect perish. God's Son,—the Son that bears the image of the Father, must be parted with. Some are content to part with a graceless and ungodly Son, but God parts with his darling, his delight, and beloved! the Son in whom he is well pleased. O astonishing and amazing love!

It is an *eternal love*. If we look to it either in respect of priority or duration, he loved us before the foundations of the world were laid. Believers in this world receive the fruit of that love, but who can trace it to its first spring and source, “Yea, I have loved them with an everlasting love: Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” Who can consider this eternal design of love and not fall into rapture, that God

* 1 John iv. 9.

should ever have entertained a thought of love and affection to such as we ; and that he should still love us to the end is what is asserted, but yet is wonderful ! Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. The change of our condition makes no alteration in God's affection, he is unchangeable, and the foundation of God stands sure.

It is a *vehement and strong love*. It must have been a vehement desire after our eternal welfare that could influence and move the supreme author of nature to pass over all the considerations of the nearness and dearness of his Son. It must be a strong love that is of such ancient date, and reaches so far as to run parallel with eternity. The distance of time and place sometimes make a great change on mens affections ; but this love is so very strong, that the grand design of mans salvation is brought about to demonstration. This love of God's seems to be far greater than Jacob's to Rachel ; he served seven years for her, God parts with his only Son, and makes him a servant for ever, “ This love is strong as death, and what “ many waters cannot quench.” He is still serviceable to the elect, although their Lord and Master, he is our intercessor with the Father.

SECOND, The end of God's giving his Son for sinners, *God gave his only begotten Son.*

To suffer what Christ suffered, what we should in our persons have undergone, was more than human nature was capable of, but "God spared not his own Son." He spared not to make him suffer, to punish and afflict him; this made him cry out, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus was he dealt with for our sakes, for there was such a debt contracted that could never have been paid, unless our surety had appeared for us, and for us suffered several ways.

IN his *body*. God did not spare him, he was put to a great deal of excruciating torture and torment on our account; his "sweating drops of blood; his being crowned with a crown of thorns, buffeted, smitten, stricken, and spit upon," were very great bodily sufferings. He was racked in every joint and member; whilst he hang upon the cross his head, his hands, his feet, and his sides were put to exquisite pain.

IN his *name*. He was given up to be the scorn, derision, and reproach of all his enemies: No eye pitied him or bemoaned him, or had compassion

upon him, but rather, on the contrary, laughed and shook their heads at him, and railed upon him. He suffered in the most scornful and deriding way, “ They bowed the knee before him, and “ said, Hail king of the Jews ;” and after all he was counted by them to be an impostor, and all his miracles did not guard him against their rage, in charging him with being a deceiver. But Christ suffered for us also.

IN his *soul*. Here indeed was placed the soul of his sufferings ; for besides those sufferings that the soul underwent, as it bore a sympathy with the body to which it was joined, there was an immediate inflection of anguish upon the soul itself, which was exercised with a great deal of foreness, sorrowfulness, horror and vexation. His enemies could smite his body, but none could smite his soul but his Father, and therefore he is said to be smitten of God, * *God made his soul an offering for sin* ; and our blessed Saviour says himself, “ my “ soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;” however, by these, incensed justice was satisfied.

To *save us*. This was the blessed consequence, —this was the design of our merciful God ; that by his death we might live. He cried out, “ It

* Isa, liii. 10.

“ is finished, and gave up the ghost.” We may stand amazed, and behold our Lord’s passion displayed to our view, in its brightest glory, its condescending humility, and in its most obliging endearments to poor sinners. He was the Father’s servant to “ save them that he had chosen.” Here is a wonderful demonstration of love, that he who was equal with the Father should become his servant. He came to do his Father’s will, as a servant ready to obey his Master ; and he not only came to do it, but took delight in doing it. And God said, “ Behold my servant.” He took upon him the form of a servant. Wonderful condescension, thus to satisfy divine justice !

To be the Elect’s *cautioner* or *surety*. There was such a debt contracted by our disobedience, that we must have remained insolvent debtors, if God had not sent the man of his right hand, who undertook the debt, and paid the utmost farthing that justice could demand : Thereupon he is said to be the “ surety of a better testament.” Whatever we had done wrong was charged to Christ’s account : He that knew no sin was made “ sin for us.”

To be our *peace maker*. Justice was so incensed, that ruin was threatened to the whole hu-

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man race. How astonishing is that love, for the person offended to send a peace-maker ; not after the manner of men, but as Christ, who stood in the gap, and warded off the fatal blow. By sin the covenant of peace was broken ; but our Lord was sent to make the peace, and therefore he is called “ the prince of peace.” And it was by the blood of his cross that the peace was made.

THIRD, To make some application.

IF God so loved the world as to give Christ for it,—how blameable are they that undervalue this love ;—as the sin is great, so they may expect an equally great punishment. The apostle seems to intimate that there were such, “ How much sorer “ punishment, that count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.” Whatever affront is done to the blood of Christ, God takes it to be done to himself. Be not therefore despisers of the love of God in Christ.

IF God so loved us, then let us be awakened this day to strong resolves, that hereafter for us to live may be Christ ; yea, only Christ, and all other interests subordinated to his. Let all you have be laid on his altar. Get your hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord ; and be it your choice

to serve him, whatever others do, for his wonderful goodness towards us. Let us * *Grow up into Christ in all things, till we are filled with all the fulness of God.* This should be the subject of our daily concern. Let us give our affections to him,—let his love to us be attractive of all the desires of our soul. If duely considered, the love of God will certainly constrain you; and happy they that can say with the apostle, “Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” Let us give ourselves wholly and all that is ours unto him, saying, “It is the Lord, and his voice we will obey.” Here my friends, here is a proper opportunity offered for doing this: We are now before the Lord, let us embrace him in Christ Jesus, by yielding ourselves unto him, “That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” I hope we need not advance motives to enforce this reasonable and seasonable duty upon you. Consider how agreeable it would be to the present occasion; for none can be suitably prepared for this solemn ordinance, but those that entirely devote themselves unto God: None but those that truly love the Lord

* Eph. iv. 15.

Jefus fhould dare venture to approach his holy table.

THERE is all in him that can be attractive of our defires: Here is beauty, goodnefs, wifdom, and propinquity of relation.

CONSIDER alfo that here is all in him thou wanteft, and can reasonably defire. Art thou blind? he has eye-falve that can cure thee. Art thou naked? his righteoufnefs can cover thee. Art thou poor? his grace can enrich thee. Art thou wounded? he is a phyfician to heal thee. Art thou filthy and polluted? his blood can cleanfe thee. Art thou dejected? his Spirit can comfort thee. Let us then be giving ourfelves unto God, in return for his many gifts beftowed upon us. Let our motto be, “ I will ferve the “ Lord.” For “ God fo loved the world,” &c.

S E R M O N VI.

IS A I A H XXX. 18.

Blessed are all they that wait for him.

THE time when, and the kings reigns in which Ifaiah prophesied, were cōtemporary with Hosea; as is observable from the first verse of the first chapter of this prophecy.

THE teachers of the ancient church were of two sorts: Ordinary, *viz.* Priests and Levites. —Extraordinary, the Prophets. These were immediately called by God, and inspired with singular gifts and graces; particularly with

a supernatural knowledge of divine mysteries, and of future events. They were invested by God with authority, superior not only to the ordinary teachers of the church, but in some sort even to the civil powers of the nation. Of these Isaiah is first in place. Some say he was of the blood-royal of Judah: As certainly he may be said to be the prince of prophets, if we consider the great extent and variety of his prophecies, the sublimity of their mysteries, the majesty of their style, and the energy of their diction. He so fully and evidently describes the person, offices, sufferings, and kingdom of Christ, that he has been called by some the fifth evangelist.

THIS chapter consists of three parts: To the 18th verse we have the sins of the people mentioned, and their punishments threatened: Of *promises* from the 18th to the 27th; and from that to the end is a *prediction* of the ruin and destruction of enemies. In the beginning of the 18th verse the Lord tells them, that their misery was the motive to God's mercy, "and therefore will the " Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto " you." Your general destruction moves me to pity and compassion. He will give you an opportunity of making your peace with him,

so that you may be exalted, and that your utter ruin may be prevented. He lets them know too, that God acts with moderation and discretion to his own people; for the Lord he is a God of judgment, “Blessed are all they that wait for him.” These words divide themselves into two heads.

First, A reward promised and expressed in that word *blessed*. It is a mighty and extensive word, it being comprehensive of all the blessings of this and the next life, those included in it shall have a share in God’s special mercy and favour; he will be a God and a guide to them in time and to eternity.

Second, The condition upon which the reward is to be obtained; or the persons that may obtain it, “All they that wait for him.” The universality of the expression is very observable; it is not confined to one person, all they that perform covenant conditions shall share in the reward. God has more than one blessing to bestow. Waiting upon God denotes a subjection and a submission to him. God is said sometimes to wait; not that he is obliged by us to do so, but thereby to testify his good will to mankind, and his willingness to shew them

mercy ; but we must wait upon God if ever we expect to find mercy from him. And every one, whether they be rich or poor, bond or free, man or woman, that wait on the Lord, shall be blessed.

WE shall comprize the words in this one doctrine, That they who wait on the Lord are truly blessed. This being the express meaning of the words of the text, there needs little to be said as a proof of it. It may be remarked that these words have a particular relation to a time of affliction, and so let us see that they who wait on God are blessed. When all other helps fail, God never leaves them.

IN discoursing from the words of the text, I shall observe the following method.

I. WHAT these blessings are for which we should wait on the Lord.

II. How, or in what manner we should wait on the Lord.

III. WHY we should thus wait on him.

IV. MAKE some application.

FIRST, WE should wait on the Lord for *counsel* and *direction*. Sometimes the way of God's people looks as if it was shut up, to which hand they know not to turn themselves; and oftentimes, for want of direction, they have gone astray from his righteous judgment. Under the most difficultuous circumstances the Lord is the only person to apply to for direction, who counsels his people: Sometimes by his word, sometimes by his rod, sometimes by his spirit, and sometimes by his ministers. And this is that which is promised to God's people, "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see them. And thine ear shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it." By these means God is pleased to afford counsel and direction to them that wait on him for it. The saints under the Old-Testament dispensation did nothing without counsel from God; upon their going out to battle God was waited upon for counsel: O happy they that make God their counsellor! Justly may it be said of him, that "he hath counsel and understanding."

FOR *safety and protection*. It is God alone that can make his people dwell in safety; for they

daily stand in need of his protection, being the only people in the world that are most exposed to contempt, ridicule, derision, and all manner of ill treatment. Sometimes God's people have been in danger from their friends, but even then, as in David's case, "when the people spake of stoning him, he encouraged himself in the Lord," firmly depending upon the supreme Being that he would afford him help: And this encourages God's people to run through a troop, and to overleap all to surmount the greatest difficulties. God promises safety to his people, "For the people shall dwell in Zion and Jerusalem, and shall weep no more." Did not God protect the Israelites from the hands of all their enemies? and did he not lead them in perfect safety through the dreary wilderness like a flock, by the skilfulness of his hand, and "bring them to the border of his sanctuary:" But, by a supernatural power, overwhelmed their enemies by a sudden and impetuous reflux of the red sea.

FOR *food and provision*. Who would not but wait upon such a God, who is of infinite wisdom to counsel and direct, of infinite power to defend and protect, and of infinite goodness to provide for us.

GOD is said to fill the hungry soul, “ and satisfy the mouth with good things.” This is one of the many blessings promised to them that wait on the Lord. He promises a plenty of all things necessary for the use and support of man, “ His bread shall be given him, his waters shall be made sure.”

FOR *comfort under affliction.* There is none more afflicted than the godly, none therefore need more comfort;—none enjoy it in a greater degree than they, as they who wait upon God are sure of receiving certain comfort, saith the psalmist, “ I waited patiently for the Lord, “ and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. “ He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, “ out of the miry clay.” David, by reason of afflictions, was brought very low, and was desperately entangled, as you find it expressed, by his being in a deep pit and miry clay; and he knew of no consolation but that which was to be obtained by waiting upon God. He performed his duty, and he obtained a deliverance. To whom shall we go, and for whom shall we wait upon for counsel but God, who is of infinite wisdom, and who is at all times omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and all-sufficient to help the needy and he that is afflicted.

CHRIST, to believers, is the principal spring of all consolation and comfort, “ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ ;” therefore he is called the comforter. What need believers be depressed, or so much troubled, when their comfort so much aboundeth.

FOR *audience to your prayers*. Some people pray, but they are little concerned for an answer. Let us imitate the psalmist, and wait at the throne of grace, which is the ready way to find mercy, “ He will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.” What is it that thou wantest ? Wait upon God by prayer, and if proper for thee, he will give thee the desire of thine heart. Happy they who employ themselves thus in the holy duty of prayer ; it is truly honourable, and a great happiness to be so employed ; for here men are admitted to converse with the supreme Architect of all worlds, —with God the Author of nature,—the King of heaven.

FOR *eternal happiness*. We cannot reasonably expect to obtain happiness any other way from God but by Christ Jesus, “ To whom should we go but to him, for he has the words of eter-

“nal life,” and he gives it to whom he pleases. God has promised to his people, not only these and other mercies in this world, but even a glorious happiness with himself in the world to come, “The Lord will give grace and glory;” and he promises to them that wait upon him to withhold no good thing.

WAIT upon God for all that you stand in need of; he is able and willing to furnish thee with every good gift, so far as your hearts can desire: What is agreeable to his will he will bestow upon thee. Art thou hungry? he will feed thee. Art thou thirsty? he will satisfy thy longing soul. Art thou ignorant, and lackest wisdom and knowledge? he will teach and instruct thee. Art thou poor and naked? he will enrich thee with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Art thou in distresses? he will relieve thee out of them. Art thou forsaken of all thy friends and relations? he will take thee up, for he is a friend that cleaves closer than a brother, he never leaves nor forsakes his own people.

SECOND, How, or in what manner we should wait on the Lord.

FAITHFULLY. Believing that he will hear

thee, and vouchsafe his help and presence; this is the way to obtain an answer to our prayers,—it is the way that God has laid down for us to wait upon him, * *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without doubting*: Not doubting but God will hear and help all who wait upon him in sincerity and in truth. If we have not this frame, and do not exercise faith in our approaches, we act the hypocrite with the Almighty. Where faith is exercised, it renders waiting upon God a pleasure; for thereby it is that we can realize those things that are at a distance, that they appear to us as if present. The happy expectation of the enjoyment of what you wait for, makes your attendance upon divine goodness to be very delightful in all its acts; such as prayer, ordinances, hearing and reading the word in faith; then you may expect to be heard, and to find mercy.

OBEDIENTIAALLY. Waiting supposes obedience; be therefore ready to obey the Author of your being when he commands you to wait upon him. If you wait upon a superior as your master on earth, and not regard his commands, your attending him is of no service; neither will he

* 1 Tim. ii. 8.

regard you? If a comparison may be made,—just so is it with the supreme Being, our heavenly Father. If we are not to obey what he enjoins, can he be pleased? Will he take that as a service done by us; will he not rather count it to be a mocking of him, and a deceiving of ourselves? for he loves obedience from his servants better than sacrifice, “and pay thy vows unto the Most High.” David was found waiting upon God for his favour, and tells us, “that he hastened, he delayed not to keep God’s commandments.

PATIENTLY. Patience very well becomes a suppliant, who very commonly have time to exercise their patience among men. God deserves to be attended upon, and with patience we should wait his answer; and this is recommended to us by the precepts as well as by the practice of the saints, “Be patient therefore, brethren: Be ye also patient.” The expression is repeated to enforce the practice: It is as much as to say, patiently submit yourselves to God’s will, and wait his pleasure; he will certainly give you a gracious answer, and he will give a just decision in your affairs; and have not we reason to be patient, when we are sure that God will hear and help? “I waited patiently for the Lord.”

HUMBLY. Humility very well becomes beggars, and the humbler a man is, the readier he is to obtain a favour, even among men. Humility highly becomes us when we wait upon the great God. The infinite disproportion there is betwixt God and man, should make us cry out in our approaches to him, "Wo is me, for I am
 " undone, I am a man of unclean lips, for mine
 " eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." God has promised to look to the humble man, "I dwell with him that is of a contrite and hum-
 " ble spirit." Humility recommends us to God's favour and protection; he "revives the heart of
 " the contrite ones," and he adds more grace to them that have it; whereas "he knows the proud
 " afar off."

ALONE. Our principal business should be to serve him, and to him only we ought to give all our time; or, at least, in all we do, we should pay particular regard to the glory of God. David gives his soul a particular charge, "My soul
 " wait thou only upon God: He is only my rock;" as if he had said, thou hast good reason so to do, for he is the best, yea, the only help that ever thou hast had; if he will not help thee none will, nor is any other able. Remember the word of the psalmist, and make God your only rock, and

wait only upon him constantly, and not now and then, if you expect him to vouchsafe to wait upon and to attend you.

THIRD, Why we should thus wait upon the Lord.

WE should wait on the Lord, because he is our *creator and maker*. If God made us, it surely becomes us to wait his pleasure, and submit to his will in all things. It very ill becomes the potsherds of the earth to rise up against God their potter, and say, “Why are we made thus?”

** Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker : Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth : Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Whatever our actions are towards our neighbours that are here called potsherd of the earth, yet surely it ill becomes us to challenge our Maker, or refuse to wait upon him in the ways of his own appointment. God by creation, or by forming us, has an undoubted right to all our services ; and if we will not wait upon and serve him, pray whom will we serve ?*

BECAUSE he is our *Father*, God is the com-

* Isa. xlv. 9.

mon parent of all mankind ; it is from him we all proceed, being made, preserved, and provided for by him : He gives us our food, he is favourable to the wretched as well as to the godly ; only the privileges the one enjoy are common, whereas the privileges of the other are special, and tokens of better things. Can we rebel against our Father ? or refuse to attend and wait upon him ? How unbecoming is it for children to cast off their filial fear, and to refuse subjection and submission to their parent. For consider that there is a wo denounced against such, “ Wo unto him that saith unto his father, what begettest thou ? or to the woman, what hast thou brought forth ? ” If this is so unseemly in children to their natural parents, how much more unbecoming in us to God who is our Father in heaven.

Because he is our *Lord and Master* ; therefore we should wait upon him. It very well becomes servants to wait their masters will and pleasure ; and you who have servants, and useth them well, may think that they ought to regard you, which is but their duty ; will you then but lay the cases to your own consciences, and see if it is not your indispensable duty to wait upon God : Have not you been calling him your Lord ? have not you

been entering into his service? have not you been saying, the Lord we will serve, and his voice we will obey? These are noble resolutions, if you perform them. Do all in your power therefore to wait upon him whom you call *Lord and Master*. Is not the prophets words applicable to many of us, “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: If then I be a father where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?” How few give the Almighty his due in these respects. Men have it from their children and servants, and it is our highest duty and interest to honour and regard the divine will.

BECAUSE he is our *husband*; therefore we should wait upon him. Husbands expect to be regarded by their wives, and demand an obedience to their lawful commands:—Shall we give that to the creature, *man*, that which we will not pay to the Creator, *God*? How unaccountable is this language and that practice. That God is our husband is very plain from scripture authority; *i. e.* the believers husband, where we are said to be espoused unto God, and married to him, * *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* Are

* 2 Cor. xi. 2.

you then espoused unto the God of heaven, and will you not wait his will and pleasure? have you entered into a marriage contract with the Most High, and sealed that covenant at the Lord's table? have you ratified it in the most solemn manner? Can you, after all these most sacred obligations, think of going back? "For he who putteth his hand to the plow, and looketh back, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven." Remember that you are married to the Most High God.

WHEN you consider God's abilities to help and supply you, then I hope you will judge it highly reasonable to wait upon him. When you wait upon any superior person, you do it either because it is your duty, by being his servant, child, or some other attendant; or, because he is able to grant you your request, and to supply your wants. You will coincide with me, who am of opinion, that it is reasonable such a person should be waited upon. Consider, my friends, your souls wants, and your God's ability to supply them. Under all your circumstances he can afford relief.

HE is a God of *infinite wisdom and knowledge*. Art thou blind by reason of the darkness that is within thee? fly to him, for he has eye-salve to

cure thee: Art thou ignorant? fly to God and wait upon him, for he can make thee wise unto salvation. Our understandings, by reason of sin, are very much obscured, but God's cannot be so, "His understanding is infinite." Wisdom and knowledge is original, essential, and independent in God: O then wait upon this God, who is ready to communicate abundantly of this his wisdom and knowledge to you.

HE is a God of *infinite goodness and mercy*. Art thou burdened with a sense of sin? fly to God's mercy, for "it is over all his other works." Art thou sensible that there is no goodness in thyself? wait upon God by prayer, beg that he will make thee good by communicating his goodness unto thee, for he is the "Author of every good and perfect gift."

HE is a God of *infinite power and strength*; therefore wait upon him. He can make "one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." Dost thou want strength to withstand temptations, or power to subdue thy corruptions? Wait upon God, and he will put upon thee that armour whereby thou shalt be able to withstand the fiery darts of the adversary. Dost thou see thine enemies too strong for thee? art thou per-

ceiving national calamities approaching? fly to the only power that is able to save, and lay hold upon the strength of our God, and thou shalt be enabled, by divine aid, to discomfit them all; for “power belongeth unto God.” David, by the powerful name and assistance of the Almighty, withstood, opposed, and defeated all his enemies, “But in the name of the Lord I will destroy them all.”

HE is a God whose presence is *every where*. Sometimes you may want assistance from your friend, when he may be absent, and you cannot get near him by reason of the great distance betwixt you; but they never are at a loss who wait upon God in any place: For he fills heaven and earth: Darkneſs and light are equal to him, “Can any hide himself in a secret place, that I shall not see him.” This is a very great advantage to God’s people, that they have access to such a God, whom they may address wherever they are, and whenever they please, without offence: Distance does not remove God one whit from us, for we may wait upon him in the field, on the mountain top, as well as in the church.

HE is a God that *changes not*, therefore wait upon him. Sometimes when you wait upon men,

their humours are such, and their tempers so variable, and circumstances so changeable, that very often all the answer you get is, that you may be heard at a more convenient season. My friends, our God is not subject to such passions, for he changes not; whom he loves once he loves to the end, * *With whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* Sometimes the change of your circumstances, as from being rich, you grow poor, very often alter mens opinion, yea their love and affection; but God changes not in his love to any. Although thy worldly circumstances may alter, take my word for it God will never neither alter nor change, unless thou forsake him. Who would not but wait upon such a God as this, that cleaves closer than a brother.

CONSIDER your own inabilities to help yourselves. If we were so wise as to need no more wisdom or knowledge, then indeed we might make an excuse for not waiting upon God. Were we so very strong and powerful, as to be able to encounter all our enemies, both spiritual and temporal, then we might make some pretence for neglecting this great and important duty. If we were so good that we needed not to be better;

* Jam. i. 17.

or so holy as to be without sin, then we needed not to fly to God, nor serve him ; but by nature we are blind and ignorant, even darkness itself, by reason of the ignorance that is in us : The very best of us who may be renewed after the image of God, may, sometimes, be forced to cry out with the apostle Paul, “ I find a law, that “ when I would do good, evil is present with me : “ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver “ me from the body of this death.” Had we such a train of relations, and so powerful an assistance as never failed, then we might apologize for our not waiting on God : But these we find are as fickle as they are friendly. Death also breaks the ties of all relations, but God never leaves nor forsakes his people. When you cannot help yourselves, there is help in God ; and he has laid help on one who is mighty to save,—therefore let us wait upon him.

FOURTH, Make some application.

WAITING upon God supposes, that we own that he is, and that he deserves to be waited upon, which reprove all atheistical persons. There are some persons who, although they do not deny God in words, they do it in works ; and some are wishing in their hearts that there were not a

God, or that he were not such a one as he is, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." Take heed of being so foolishly mad, either to deny, or disbelieve the being of God, or his divine attributes, or to deprive him of his perfections. Such who will not wait upon, nor acknowledge him, will one day be ready to say to the hills, "fall upon us."

WAITING upon God reproves all irreligious persons. This is a step farther than the sinner goes: First to deny the being of a God, and then to deny him his service and worship. Prayerless persons, those who will not bow the knee unto God, unless they are forced; such receive not, for they do not ask. All who despise to wait upon the divine ordinances. This is a tribute that God requires of us, and it is the duty of all created beings. Although many attend public ordinances, yet they are ready to say it is a weariness; their minds are upon some favourite business, buying or selling, while they should be laying up store and provision for eternity.

SUCH as do not read God's word, or think his laws a burden. A man who mocks the word of his prince, and undervalues his just laws: Do you

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think he should go unpunished? Do you think to slight God's word, and undervalue the statutes of heaven, and prosper? It may be said, that too, too many cast the word of God, as it were, behind their backs: For whatever reverence you pay to God's word, he takes it as done to himself.

WAITING upon God reproveth all profane persons. This is still a degree farther than the impenitent sinner arrives at. After they turn atheistical, and cast off the fear of God, by turning irreligious, and neglecting their duty, they turn profane, and stick at no abomination, and become guilty of drunkenness, swearing, lying, stealing, covetousness, and all manner of debauchery. It is very lamentable my friends, after men is often reprov'd for these sins, that they do not mend their ways: They still continue committing these very abominable sins. Do you think that you are above God? that you are beyond the reach of his laws? Do you think that your Maker does not observe your actions? Do not you think the oftener you offend, the greater will be your punishment? Are you still resolv'd to go on, and pursue your sinful course, and neglect your duty to the very last day, that you are to depart hence, and be no more? If this is your resolve, it is al-

most needless for you to hear a minister preach God's word any more.

BE exhorted to wait upon God.—I think the duty so reasonable, that a motive need hardly be mentioned to press it upon you. If you were invited to wait upon a great prince, or king, every one would run to be first.—Compare the cases, and fly to obey the King of kings.

CONSIDER the practice of the saints. David *waited patiently for the Lord*. He had his stated time of service, that nothing might divest him from waiting upon his God. How encouraging are the promises that are made to such as wait upon God: That of our text is inclusive of all the rest, “Blessed are all they that wait for him.” He threatens to punish them that will not wait upon him. He is said to shut his ears when their cry comes, when they pray and call upon him; because they would not pray when they had the best opportunity.

CONSIDER how honourable a post it is to be servants to a king. If the queen of Sheba thought those very happy and highly honoured that stood before Solomon, how much more so those that wait upon God the King of kings.

CONSIDER how short and uncertain the time is, that you may have it in your power to wait upon God.—Our day seems to be drawing to a period. O fly to God your rock and refuge, before destruction overtake you!—For blessed are all they that wait for him.

S E R M O N VII.

J O H N xxi, 17.

And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee: Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

THIS and the former chapter contain an account of our Saviour's exaltation, and victorious triumph over all his enemies, by his powerful resurrection. They also give us an account of Christ's manifestation of himself to his disciples, in the several steps and degrees of it. His first appearance to Mary Magdalene, and then to Peter and John, next to all the disciples,

except Thomas, and afterwards to him also. In the 21st chap. we have an account of our Saviour's shewing himself to his disciples by the sea of Tiberias,—which is in another place called the sea of Galilee. In the 2^d ver. we have the names of the disciples, to whom our Saviour at this time manifested himself. And in the 3^d an account of Peter's, and the rest of the disciples' bad success in their fishing, "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing," &c. From the 4th to the 12th ver. there is a particular account of our blessed Saviour's third appearance to his disciples; together with a complication of miracles. The disciples had toiled "all the night" and caught nothing;" but as soon as Jesus appeared, and gave the command, they caught such a "multitude of fishes," that they were not able to draw them out. As soon as they were come to land, they were followed with a train of miracles,—“ They saw a fire of coals, “ and fish laid thereon, and bread.” Those were not the fishes which were caught by the fishermen, but were produced by our Saviour Jesus Christ, as an evidence of his divine power. In the 11th ver. Christ works another miracle. This was confirmed unto them by the great number and largeness of the fishes that were caught, together with seeing the net remain

whole and unbroken. From the 12th to the 15th we have an account of the disciples dining with Jesus,—his feeding them with bread, and giving them fish. By the former miracle, in catching the fishes, Christ proved himself to be God ; and, by his present eating, he evidenced himself to be man. Immediately after this, in the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses, our Lord puts Peter upon a threefold profession of his love to him, answerable to his thrice denying of him. The 17th gives us an account of the third time that Christ required Peter's profession of his love to him, and Peter's answer to his question, “ He
“ said unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jo-
“ nas, lovest thou me ?” It is the latter part of this verse I purpose, through the divine aid, to insist upon. The first part of which contains Peter's third profession of his love to Christ, “ Thou know-
“ est that I love thee.” The second, the evidence which he gives of the sincerity of his love, by appealing to Christ himself, who is the searcher of hearts, “ Lord thou knowest all things,
“ thou knowest that I love thee.” He does not boast and say, Lord I love thee above all, and before all. His former fall had taught him humility, and he is now content to rank himself among the true lovers of Christ, “ Lord thou
“ knowest that I love thee.” These words

were an effectual evidence of the sincerity of Peter's love, and are a plain proof of the divinity of Christ. He says not, Lord thou knowest many things, thou knowest I love thee, which some of the Socinians affirm to be the sense of the text, but he says, "Lord thou knowest all things." Which words, considering the sincere profession that Peter made of his love to Christ, and their agreeing with other texts of scripture, make it evident that they are to be understood in the most universal extent; and therefore he knew not only many things, but all things.

WE have the office or business that our Lord is about to employ Peter in, "Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep;" that is, take care of my flock. It is a figurative expression, borrowed from shepherds feeding and taking care of their flocks, and very properly applied to ministers of the gospel.

FROM these words we observe the following doctrines.

I. THAT Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer is God equal with the Father, "Lord thou knowest all things."

II. THAT they, and only they, who love Jesus Christ, are fit and qualified for any part of his service, especially for feeding his sheep, or taking care of his flock, “Thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep.” Christ says this consequentially upon Peter’s loving him.

IN prosecuting the first doctrine, I shall endeavour to make it appear,

I. THAT Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer is God equal with the Father.

II. ANSWER some objections that are made against the divinity of Christ.

III. AND lastly make a short application.

FIRST, To make it evident that Jesus Christ is God equal with the Father.

THIS appears from the attributes that are mutually communicated to God the Father and the Son. And it appears from scripture that these attributes are equally communicated to both; then it necessarily follows that Jesus Christ is God.—Omnipotency and eternity are both

attributed to Christ, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Hereby Christ discovers his divinity to us, in that he is God co-essential and consubstantial with the Father, the same attributes being given to both, which plainly evidence his absolute perfection and power, sovereignty and dignity, eternity and divinity. He is said to be omnipresent, or in all places, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I," more especially, "in the midst of them:" Which is a plain proof of Christ's divinity, and also a gracious promise made by him, of his presence with his people. Omniscience is attributed to him, of which the words of the text are a plain proof, "Lord thou knowest all things." By this he at once gave a true sign of his love to Christ, in that he could appeal to the searcher of hearts, which was an invincible argument of Christ's divinity.

THE names of God are attributed to Christ, and by these his divinity appears, "As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the holy one of Israel. The Son of God is come. This is the true God, and eternal life." This undeniably proves the divinity of Jesus Christ;

and points to none but the Supreme Independent Being, the infinitely great God, * *And of whom as after the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.* He is over all things, and all persons, “He is God blessed for evermore.” However the Socinians may pervert the sense of this text, yet the plain meaning and intent of it is, to shew, that although, according to the flesh, his descent was from Abraham, yet he had another nature which was not derived from him, namely, his divine nature, and according to which he is God blessed for evermore.

THE divinity of Jesus Christ appears in this, that these very works which are done by God are said also to be done by him, “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” He was the Author of the creation, and not an instrument in creating. This is the argument the Evangelist John makes use of to prove the divinity of Christ. He that made all things is truly and really God, but Christ made all things, and nothing was made without him; therefore Christ is truly and really God. He is said to be the preserver of all things, “He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.” It implies a contra-

* Rom. ix. 5,

diction in it, to say that God who created all things, and by whom every thing is preserved, that he should be a creature:—The same thing cannot be both the Creator and the created.

FROM the honour and worship that is given unto Christ, it appears that he is God equal with the Father. The very angels are commanded to adore him, “And let all the angels of God worship him.” If he were not God, it would be idolatry to worship him; neither would the angels have been commanded to adore him. We are to honour him as we do the Father. That is a plain instance of Christ’s godhead, and an evidence of his equality with the Father. We are to honour him with the same faith, love, fear and worship, that is due to God the Father.

II. I COME to answer some objections against the divinity of Christ.

FIRST, Some may say, “That God the Father is the head and Father of Jesus Christ, and therefore greater than he; Christ is his servant, a priest, a mediator, he was tempted, and he died.” Upon these accounts they call in question his divinity. I answer, that with respect to Christ’s human nature, he may be said to die;

for as he was man, and his body earthly, so he was visible and mortal. But with respect to his divine nature he was not ; *that* never died, nor can it suffer any corruption. The

SECOND *objection* is founded upon that scripture, “ The Son can do nothing of himself,” but what he seeth the Father do. The Socinians, to prove that Christ is not God equal to the Father, make a handle of this assertion of the Evangelist’s, not having sagacity enough, or are unwilling to distinguish betwixt Christ’s divine and human nature. By virtue of his divine nature he could do every thing, which were not contrary to his divine perfections, nor inconsistent amongst themselves : This proves him to be equal with God the Father ; for he counted it no robbery so to be. By his human nature, as he stood in his mediatorial office, or capacity, he could do nothing but what the Father appointed him.

AGAIN. WE are not to suppose that Christ, in his divine nature, is separated from God ; for the scripture saith, “ Whatsoever thing he doeth, “ these also doeth the Son likewise,” because they are one and the same God. The

THIRD *objection* is, “ That he who begets

“ ought to be before him that is begotten ; there,
 “ fore, if Christ was begotten by the Father, he
 “ cannot be co-eternal with him, and consequent-
 “ ly cannot be equal to him.”

BUT this objection also is groundless and absurd : Although in a natural spontaneous generation this is certainly the case ; yet in a supernatural and necessary generation it is not so.

How this generation happens, and how produced, we are much in the dark to know, nor is it absolutely necessary for us to understand it ; only that which may help our conceptions is, that there is something in it that is analogous, and bears a resemblance to natural generation. The

FOURTH *objection* is drawn from that scripture, where Christ is said to be the “ first born “ of every creature.” Therefore the Socinians would reckon him among the number of creatures.

BUT if they would take the connection of the latter part of the verse with the former, where Christ is called, “ The image of the invisible “ God.” In the following verse he is said to be the “ Creator of all things,” and in the 17th, “ by

“him all things consist.” He was from eternity, and therefore before every creature in point of dignity and duration. He was heir of all things, and “every thing was made by him, and without him nothing was made that was made.

I COME now to the II. doctrine, namely,

THAT they, and only they, who love Jesus Christ, are properly qualified for any part of his service, especially for feeding his sheep, or taking care of his flock. The truth of this may be illustrated from several instances, but this appears so very plain, from this and the foregoing verses, that it is needless to advance any other.—Our Saviour puts a threefold question to Peter, with respect to his loving of him, and Peter’s answer to Christ was still the same. He was stedfast in his love, and could appeal to him of the sincerity of his heart. Our Lord sees it necessary to employ him in his service, and to make him a shepherd of his flock. If Peter had not loved Christ, it is possible, nay, very probable, he had never been employed in his service at all.—But shall refer this for the next discourse, and shall conclude this with a short

APPLICATION.

Is it so that Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeem-

er is God equal with the Father? From thence may be inferred just ground of rebuke and reproof to those who militate against the Deity of Christ as wholly to deny it.

How can such expect to be saved by him who in effect deny the Lord that bought them. With what a melancholy and miserable aspect will they appear at the last and great day, when they shall visibly see their false and blasphemous notions plainly confuted, and they themselves rejected; and for their wicked and erroneous opinions severely punished. This doctrine surely speaks terror to sinners, for they deny, reject, and make light of God.

Is Jesus Christ equal with the Father? is his Deity unquestionable? then let all be exhorted to put their trust in him, "He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him." He gave himself for us; he suffered ignominy and reproach from men upon our account; he bare the lashes of the divine wrath; he divested himself of his glory; for a time he humbled himself to the death for us; nay, he commands that all the ends of the earth should "look unto him. To whom should we go but unto him, for he has the words of eternal life." He can make us for

ever happy if we will trust in him, but eternally miserable if we reject him. Oh! then let us embrace this exhortation, and be induced to believe in him: Let us not stand at a distance while Christ makes an offer of himself to us.

Is it so that our Redeemer is God equal with the Father? Then every believing soul has reason to rejoice, and to be encouraged, under the greatest difficulties and hardships, and to put their trust in him who is the rock of ages. Let the wicked revile; mock, backbite; and do their worst: Yet this is matter of the greatest comfort and support, that Jesus Christ is God. He sees and observes the carriage and behaviour of the wicked to his people, and will punish them according to their wicked deeds; and when he sees fit, can, and will deliver his people from all their afflictions. Their encouragement does not only consist in this, that he will save them from their enemies; but also, that Jesus Christ knows all their wants and necessities better than they do themselves, and is ready to supply their exigencies. They are the heirs of the promise, who have fled to the refuge that is set before them, whose wants Christ will supply out of his abundance, and by his almighty arm will protect and defend them.

GLORY be to our God, who has sent his only begotten Son, the Word or wisdom of the Father, that divine person, by whom he created the world, and by whom he has made all particular manifestations of himself unto men, that he should send him, to take upon him our nature, to make a full revelation of the divine will to us, who by sin had corrupted ourselves, and forfeited the favour of God;—to preach unto men repentance and remission of sin, by giving himself a sacrifice; to declare the acceptableness of repentance, and the certainty of pardon thereupon, in a new and living way, evidently consistent with the vindication of the honour and authority of the divine laws, and with God's irreconcilable hatred against sin:—To be a mediator and an intercessor between God and man:—To be the Saviour and judge of mankind, to bring them to eternal life.—For Christ is God. As to the incredibility of the doctrine, that God should make so great a condescension to his creatures; and that a person of such dignity as the only begotten Son of God, should vouchsafe to give himself a sacrifice for the sins of men: He who duly considers that it is no diminution to the glory and greatness of the Creator of all things, to inspect, govern, and direct every thing by his all-wise providence through the

whole creation ; to take care of the meanest of his creatures, so that not “ a sparrow falls to the ground,” or “ a hair of our head perishes,” without his knowledge ; and he observes every particle of inanimate matter in the universe. Yet it is a most wonderful and amazing instance of humility and condescension, that Christ the Son of God should concern himself so far for sinful men, as to appear in the flesh, and to veil himself, as it were, with our nature, on purpose to reveal the will of God more clearly to men, to give himself a sacrifice and expiation for their sins, and to bring them to repentance and eternal life. Well does it become every one of us, with the most profound reverence, to say, Lord thou knowest all things, and through the assistance of thy grace may we ever love thee.

S E R M O N V I I I .

J O H N xxi. 17.

And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee : Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

THIS *verse* was divided into two doctrines, viz.

I. THAT Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer is God equal with the Father, “ Lord thou “ knowest all things.”

II. THAT they, and they only, who love Je-

his Christ, are qualified for any part of his service ; especially for feeding his sheep, or taking care of his flock.

THE first of these I have already explained at full length.

IN discoursing from this second doctrine, I shall,

I. SHEW how persons may be said to love Christ so as to be fit for serving of him, especially for feeding of his Flock.

II. SHEW what is implied in feeding the flock of Christ.

III. APPLY.

FIRST, By a person loving Christ, so as to be fit for serving him and feeding his sheep, is not to be understood in a meritorious sense ; as if a person by his love to Christ could merit to be employed in his service, no ; but it seems good in the eyes of our Lord to require such fitting qualifications, or conditions, that so they may be capable of serving him.

IF so, then we should love him with a super-

lative transcendent love : A love in the highest degree, if ever we would expect to be employed in his service ; such persons love Christ more than their friends and riches, yea more than their very life ; and there is no being Christ's disciple, if a person does not love Jesus, " He that loveth a father, mother, son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me." By worthiness, we are not to understand the meritoriousness of the action, but the qualification of the person. As if he had said ; that he who would come unto Christ and be his disciple, should, by a deliberate act of the understanding, and consent of the will, prefer him to all his relations in the world ; and when they, or any thing else come in competition with Christ, they should be regarded as things of no value ; and this is the way to have our love rightly regulated and directed : First, and above all, to love Christ, and then our relations, or other things, so far as they do not hinder our love to Christ, or stand in competition with him. It is reasonable for us to love Christ above all, having done so very much for us, and that he is still doing, and is able and willing to do for us, whatever we stand in need of. He is the end of the law, the sum of the gospel, the way to the Father, the only Saviour of sinners.

IT is a sincere and hearty love that must qualify us for serving Christ. Hypocrites dissemble in their love to Jesus; they love him only as Judas did, when he came and saluted his divine Master with a kiss, and betrayed him. They love him no longer than their conveniency serve them, nor follow him farther than the loaves are a distributing. But gracious souls love Christ sincerely, and the sincerity of their love sometimes discovers itself in their sufferings for the profession of his name; and sometimes they love him, when he hides his face from them. Mary's love appeared in her weeping at Christ's grave, although he was dead. The sincerity of her love appeared afterwards, in venting her grief where our Saviour lay. Sincere love shuns the least mixture of corruption, nor will it admit of any alloy, or sinister ends. It is first internal, and chiefly proposes God for its object, and expects its reward from him.

IT must be a strong love to Christ that will qualify any person for his service. For their love to men, they must lay their accounts to meet little encouragement; and not only so, but very great abasement; yet this love must be so strong as to overcome these. It may so fall out at some certain season, that a saint's love to Christ may

not be so vigorous and active as at other times; and frequently it may grow weak and languid: But the habit of this love can never be lost, there is still the seeds and principle of it remaining in the heart; and when it is in some lively exercise, it makes the possessor willing either to do or suffer all things for Christ, "For love is strong as death: Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." It was the strength of love that made the apostle Paul so laborious in acting, and bold in suffering, and so patient under reproaches, "The love of Christ constrained him." This love has a constraining power in it. It denotes the absolute empire which the love of Christ had over him, ruling all the inclinations of his heart and of his life: It signifies the sweet violence and force of love, by which the soul is overpowered, and cannot say nay; it wholly possesses us, it rules and commands us: It makes us to do whatever it would have us. Is not this a love that can surmount the greatest difficulties, and not be afraid of dangers; still remain invincible and unconquered. Yet such a love they must have who would be qualified for feeding of Christ's flock.

It must be a constant love to Christ in all conditions. How unseemly a thing would it be

for one of the flock to forsake Christ; but much more so for the Shepherd himself to go astray, to the great hazard and danger of the flock. How much satisfaction then is there in a constant love to Christ; a love that will follow him in adversity as well as in prosperity; a love that is not only lasting, but everlasting. A gracious soul is so constant in his love to Christ, that nothing can separate him from the love of Jesus; that is, none shall separate,—nothing shall separate the believer from the love of his Saviour, either from the love which he bears to Christ, or that Christ bears to him: There is no person, nor condition of life, neither “height, nor depth, “nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” The

SECOND General Head is, What is implied in feeding of Christ’s sheep.

It implies a keeping close to the word of God; these are the green pastures where the flocks should be fed, and where they should rest at noon. There it is that the wholesome food is to be had, and from whence spiritual nourishment may be administered. This is the storehouse of divine truths, where the refreshing, comforting, supporting food lies; where the blessed

and gracious promise is made to those that have an agreeable practice, a true unfeigned Christian simplicity of life, manners, and conversation. This is where the sincere desire may improve in divine knowledge, and where the milk that nourishes “new born babes” in Christ, is to be found.

FEEDING the flock of Jesus implies great care and unwearied diligence. There are many wolves, and devouring ravaging beasts, who would prey upon the flock, and whose study and desire it is to devour them, if the Shepherd were not to feed them in green pastures; and whose part it is to conduct them to those places where they will be safe from the attempts of their implacable enemies, and should endeavour to save them from the destructive designs and attempts of their adversaries. It is also the Pastor's part to guide and govern them by such sound rules and suitable directions, as that they may not be stumbling blocks to one another, and be the occasion of their falling. They are to have a continual eye upon their flock, and upon themselves, which heightens their care, “Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers;” which not only denoteth the constant concern and care they should have of their flocks,

but also to have a particular regard to their own conduct, as well as that of their flocks; that so the sheep, beholding the good example and pattern of their shepherds, or ministers, might endeavour to follow after and imitate them.

FEEDING the flock implies suitable qualifications in the shepherd, or pastor, for that office. And indeed considering the greatness of the work, and the qualifications requisite, well may it be said, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Who are they that have suitable gifts and graces for that work? Who have such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit of God upon them, as may be sufficient to render them capable for the suitable discharge of that great office? Who are they that have sufficient bodily strength, and spiritual qualifications, as may render them useful in that exalted capacity? We see that our Lord requires that his own disciples should be qualified for this work; and therefore he asked Peter three several times, “if he loved him?” This was the condition our Saviour required of Peter; and his being so qualified made him capable of being admitted into this great and honourable office, “Peter said, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee: Jesus saith unto him, “feed my sheep.”

I COME now to the last thing proposed, namely,

THIRD, The APPLICATION.

Is it so that love to Christ is a necessary qualification in order to be employed in his service? then let us examine, and try if we have a sincere and hearty love to Christ: Let us try if we can say with as much sincerity as Peter did, “ Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” If we could say so, we might have just ground to think and expect that Christ would give us a favourable answer. But lest any gracious soul should doubt of the sincerity of their love to Christ, I shall give you some signs by which you may know whether you really bear a true love to Jesus or not.

If you be often thinking on Christ, it is a good sign that your love to him is sincere. If you think what he is! what he has done and suffered for you among men. We often think upon the person we regard; have we not much more reason to think it will be so with the believer, in reference to Christ Jesus, who has done infinitely more for him than any man could? and if we love him, we shall often, as the psalmist David did, “ Remember him upon our beds,

“ and meditate on him in the night watches.”

IF you long for the gracious presence of Christ, in his ordinances, and cannot be satisfied when he withdraws his presence. The spouse was in such a frame, when she * *charged the daughters of Jerusalem to tell her beloved that she was sick of love*,—she could not be easy: When Christ hid his face, *she then run about, and sought him whom her soul loved*. Christ's presence is not always allowed his people in ordinances; he has his accesses, and his recesses, his comings to his people, and his goings from them; and this he many times does, as a trial of his peoples love to him,—how they will carry and behave themselves under the several dispensations of his providence towards them. The dictates of religion constantly teach us that it is our highest duty; and that “ if we know our duty, happy are we if we do it.”

IF there is longings for some love tokens from Jesus Christ among men, persons are dissatisfied without some tokens of love: But oh! how much more should we be uneasy, till we have some love tokens from Christ, some signs that he is our Lord and our Redeemer; that God is

* Cant. v. 8.

a reconciled God unto us ; that he is a God nigh at hand, and not afar off ; that we are his people, and that he will save us. Although at times the believer may be under the shadow of God's countenance, and, as it were, walk in darkness, and have no light, yet he earnestly desires some love-token from God ;—that he would lift up the light of his countenance upon him ; and to enable him to say with sincerity, “ My
“ soul, O God, is the workmanship of thy hand,
“ and with my whole soul may I for ever love
“ thee !”

If thou lovest the things of Jesus Christ. It was a most heavy complaint that was drawn up by Paul, “ For all seek their own, not the things
“ which are Jesus Christ's.” If there be love to Jesus Christ, we will love his ordinances,—those places where he has promised to meet his people. We will love his ministers, his ambassadors, his friends, his laws and statutes ; yea, and the very cross of Christ, if we love him, we shall bear that with patience, and esteem it our highest honour that we are thought worthy to suffer for his name. As God is the most powerful, the wisest, and likewise the best of beings ; whose goodness is infinite, and whose “ tender
“ mercies are over all his works,” does not he

very justly challenge the highest degree of love?

Is it then really so, that love to Christ is a necessary qualification in order to be employed by him in his service: What a dismal situation are they in then, and how severely are they to be reprov'd, who thus pretend to be servants to Christ, and yet are destitute of that very qualification which is so necessary. Such persons follow him more for worldly profit and advantage, than for any thing else: They never shall be able to stand in the day of trial and persecution, for this very plain reason; because they act not from any principle of love to Christ, nor from any other motive to Christianity, than from the precept of worldly profit and advantage. They cannot appeal to him who is the "searcher of hearts, and "the tryer of the reins," for the confirmation of the sincerity of their love to Christ, because it is not of the right kind.

AGAIN. Let all, as this is the case, be persuaded and exhorted, who expect, and who would desire to be employed by Christ in any part of his service, to have love in their hearts to Jesus Christ, as well as to God the Father and Omnipotent preserver of all. Let this principle influence all our actions. Is it possible to love one

more worthy than he? Surely not; for he is altogether lovely and amiable, “the chief among “ten thousand.” Can we love one who better deserves our love than Christ? No; for he loved us “even to death,” and when “we were enemies to him,” and consequently when we were enemies to our own good and happiness. He loved us from all eternity; he unveiled his divine glory, he took our natures upon him; he suffered for our sins; yet he himself knew no sin. Should not these instances of Christ’s love to us move us to love him in our turn. The advantages arising to us from Christ’s death are many and unspeakably great, for thereby a “new and “a living way” is consecrated, whereby we may have peace with God, and at last “be received “into those heavenly mansions, which are prepared for those that love Jesus Christ;”—into that place, “where there is fulness of joys and “of pleasures for evermore.” But on the other hand. If we do not love Jesus Christ, the disadvantages are numerous, and the evils we bring thereby upon ourselves are great. We cannot expect to be employed by him in his service here, and much less in his service hereafter, and which is performed by the saints above, if we do not love Christ: If there were no greater disadvantage in it than this, yet still it is an awful thought to a gracious

soul to be externally excluded from God's presence, and deprived of the company of blessed saints, who are continually employed in his service. We shall not only be excluded from, and shut out of the habitation of God and the saints, if we do not love him; but we shall eternally perish, being "workers of iniquity." There is no coming unto the Father but by him, and there is no coming unto him but by * *faith, which worketh by love*. Therefore if any man have not love, he cannot have faith; and if he has not faith, he cannot go to God by Christ, consequently he must perish. The apostle Paul says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha." The ground or cause of this curse is on account of backwardness to love Christ. The bare want of this affection is enough eternally to separate us from Christ and the saints. This is one of the heaviest and bitterest of all divine curses. And seeing they who do not love Christ fall under the lash of this severe curse; what must they expect who openly hate, and directly oppose him and his laws. Surely if there is one place of greater torment than another, it is deservedly due to them.

Is it so that we ought to love Christ? Then

* Gal. v. 6,

we have great reason to lament and mourn, that so few do love him. Now-a-days, more people take pleasure in openly professing their hatred to him, than either to love, fear, or obey his laws. Such persons disrespect his ministers, despise his people, and make light of his cause, and never study his interest; but are ready to say as Pharaoh did, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." The love they bear to the world, and the pleasure they take in sin, perfectly extirpates, and justles out the affection they ought to bear to Christ: They are of the same opinion with Pharaoh, who loved *only* the world, and disregarded God's messengers, who were sent to him with an express command to allow the Israelites to serve their God whom they loved, but he would not. The little regard he had to, and the contracted notions he had formed of religion, led him to think, that it was more immediately necessary they should serve him the whole of their lives,—to enable him to amass riches, than to serve God for a year, a month, a day, nay, a single hour.

THIS lamentation and mourning ought to be accompanied with prayer and supplication to God; that he would pour forth the spirit of love to

Christ, upon all ranks and degrees of people, that they may manifest the love and affection they bear to Christ's interest and cause, by standing by and pleading for it, even though there should be apparent danger attending the adhering to it. That they may also love his ministers, take delight in his ordinances, and love to be where he is to be found: And that they may evidence their regard to Christ and his ordinances, by loving his people, by encouraging them, and endeavouring to defend them against their adversaries and cruel enemies; so that many may be able to make, that sincere profession of their love to him as Peter did, who said in the words of the text, " Lord
" thou who knowest all things, thou knowest
" also how much I love thee."

BUT some of you may be ready to ask, What shall we do to get this blessed affection riveted in our hearts? I answer,

THAT we should be fully persuaded that Christ's love to us is such, that all that ever he did, suffered, and is still doing for us, was out of a sincere and hearty affection for *our* welfare. This is the course we should steer, if we would have our affections centered in Jesus. We should believe that Christ came into the world, no less to

procure *our* love, than to testify *his own*. It must surely have been a real love which Christ bore to sinners ; who suffered in the body, was persecuted and buffeted, and who at last died a cruel and awful death upon an accursed tree, to bring them to salvation and eternal happiness.

AGAIN. To get this love ingrafted in our hearts, we should have our affections weaned from the world, so far as it is not consistent with the love we ought to bear to Christ. For saith the apostle, “ Love not the world, neither the
“ things that are in the world ; if any man love
“ the world, the love of the Father is not in
“ him.” We ought not to divide our affections betwixt Christ and the world, “ No man can
“ serve two masters,” neither can the stream of pure love run two different ways at the same time.

FURTHER. We should give a constant attendance upon the ordinances, where Christ is exhibited as courting and entreating souls to love him. These are the places where Christ meets with his people :—These are the places where the soul enjoys sweet intercourse with Christ :—These are the places where Christ communicates his love

to the believer, and fills their souls, as it were, with marrow and fatness.

ONCE MORE. We should not only meditate upon Christ's love to us, but we should pray that God would infuse into our hearts this grace of love. We should plead earnestly and heartily, and make use of all the moving expressions and considerations that God would bestow this grace upon us. God styles himself the hearer of prayer; and if we pray "in faith, not doubting," he surely will hear us, and answer our requests.

LASTLY. If there be the least degree of love in us, we ought to be constant in the exercise of it; that so, by repeated acts, we may at last arrive at, and have a settled habit strengthened in us. There is nothing better to strengthen and increase love, than to be frequent in the acts of it; and if so, then at last we may also say with Peter, "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." God grant that this may always be the language of our hearts, and to his name be everlasting praise.

S E R M O N IX.

P S A L M xvi. II.

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: In thy presence
is fulness of joy, at thy right-hand are pleasures
for evermore.*

SOME think that the nature of this psalm is clearly opened up by the word Michtam, which signifies a Golden Psalm. True it is, that the nature of it is precious, and the sentiments excellent; but other psalms are worthy of the same appellation, having the same title prefixed, which come far short of its excellency. But titles are trifles.

THE body of this psalm is most sweet and refreshing: David no doubt speaks of himself in it, though at the same time with an eye to Christ Jesus: For there are some expressions there very applicable to David, and others to Christ: Some wherein David lively typifies and represents Christ; others that may be justly applied to both; as the words of the text.

THERE is no body in the world but desires to be happy: Yet, alas! mankind commonly mistake the nature of true blest, and the wrong way to attain it: They will follow their own inventions rather than the dictates of their conscience, and by this means, instead of being happy, they too, too often, render themselves miserable.

IN the words of our text, however, we have not only the nature of this happiness in GLORY pointed out to us, but the way to enjoy it; together with the full assurance of it at God's right hand, where there are fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore.

“THOU wilt shew me the path of life,” is a comfortable expression to the believer, as it points out the way to heaven and to eternal glo-

ry. Some think the words principally relate to Jesus Christ; others, that David may be very justly included. We find the apostle Paul explaining it of Jesus Christ. However, you see the assurance of glory in these words, “Thou wilt shew me the path of life:” So that if ever we wish to attain heaven, we must be directed by, and walk in the paths of God, which only leadeth to life. By life, is meant eternal life; for in the verse immediately preceding the text, he is supposed to be dead and buried.

WE have a description of the nature of this happiness that the saint shall enjoy hereafter, “In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore.” In these words we have the happiness described by its quality,—a state of joy and pleasure. Heaven is without any alloy or mixture; there you have every thing your souls can desire;—there you have every thing that can make you happy;—there you are blessed, completely blessed, at God’s right-hand.

We have this happiness described also by its quantity;—“there is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore.” There, even at God’s right-hand, is happiness without measure, there

is joy without mixture; that is, full and complete: This is stable and lasting; and both are without any mixture of sin. The joy and satisfaction we shall have in heaven is full and perfect, far beyond what we can attain to in this sinful world.

THIS happiness is described by the place where they enjoy it,—“ In God’s presence, and at his “ right-hand.” This he mentioned as the safest and most honourable place,—the place where the saints are said to be at last,—the place where Christ is, and where he is said to sit, “ So shall “ we be ever with the Lord.” The heathens had their different notions of this happiness here spoken of by the psalmist: And no wonder, for they were not acquainted with that gospel which bringeth life and immortality to light. Some of them did not believe a future state, nor a resurrection; others of them did: But every sincere Christian, and true believer, may confidently, with David, write upon his tomb-stone, *Resurgam*; and confidently say, “ Thou wilt shew “ me the path of life: For in thy presence is “ fulness of joy, at thy right-hand are pleasures “ for evermore.”

IN further discoursing from these words, I shall endeavour,

A a

I. To point out this path of life ; or, the way to eternal glory.

II. WHERE, or how God shews this path.

III. LAY down the nature of this happiness.

IV. CONCLUDE with some application.

FIRST, I am to point out this path of life ; or the way to eternal glory.

It is not by our own personal righteousness. Let no person deceive himself by thinking that human acts of justice and honesty will procure him eternal salvation : These are indeed necessary, though not sufficient, “ Our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees,” which consisted chiefly in external forms and ritual observances ; they having substituted these in place of purity of heart, and holiness of life, “ otherwise we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” What are we ? What have we that can sufficiently recommend us to Almighty God, in order to eternal salvation ? There is nothing within us but “ wounds, bruises, putrefying sores,” and all manner of uncleanness. All we can do is but our duty when done ; and when

we have done all, we are even then “unprofitable servants. All our righteousness are as “filthy rags,” on which, if any man depend, will find it to be like a broken reed, that will certainly fail him at the last.

It is not for the sake of another man's righteousness. Although we are to be followers after a good man's footsteps, yet all they even can do will not be sufficient for their own salvation. I know no such doctrine in the scriptures as works of merit or supererogation: Yet the Papists maintain, that a man may not only merit happiness for himself, but by virtue of his merit may, and does, forward the happiness of others, by their merit, to eternal life. Surely this is not the thought of the Christian, the sincere believer? Surely this is not the way, the divine path of God, pointed out in the text? “For by the “deeds of the law no man can be justified.” A man may be highly esteemed amongst his neighbours; he may neither openly steal, nor publicly defraud his brother; yet this is not sufficient, for “God knoweth the heart: For that “which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

It is not by sloth nor idleness. The Christian

has no time to be idle, every day has its duty to perform. Idleness, in a common sense, brings on poverty: So also it does in a spiritual sense. To-day some men are zealous in their duty; to-morrow neglect it altogether. Sometimes they act according to conscience; sometimes according to their own perverse notions and inclinations: And thus they go on, as it were, in a kind of zig zag direction;—sining and repenting by turns, till at last they ruin their own schemes, and plunge themselves at once into an awful eternity. What harm did Peter bring upon himself by his sloth? How did Christ, and the rest of the apostles, inveigh against it. By sloth and inactivity, the traveller has often lost the end of his journey. By sloth too often the Christian traveller has lost heaven; and God at the end will say to many, in a worse sense than Christ said to Peter and the apostles, “Sleep on now.” They have a long sleep, but a dreadful waking shall they have at last, who never rouse their senses till the flames of hell-fire scorch them, till they open their eyes amidst the damned.

It is not by covetousness nor worldly mindedness. While men covet the world, or the things of the world, its pleasures, which are vain, its

riches, which are fading, they generally lose the better part, the eternal welfare of their immortal souls. Dreadful thought! What a poor exchange! * *For the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.* The rich man in the gospel was shipwrecked upon this rock, as well as the young man, "who had large possessions." They were, no doubt, happy in what they enjoyed; but this was their ruin. All who walk in the wrong path shall never arrive at, nor enjoy the fruits of a godly life; "Nor shall any covetous person inherit the kingdom of heaven."

NOR by debauchery. How happy do some men imagine themselves, when they give their inclinations full sway; and when their hearts, with their tongues, chearful cry out, "Here will we stay, and here will we take up our abode;" but never once consider how short-lived, how transient this happiness is here, when compared to the risque they run of for ever being shut out from the happiness hereafter. One man takes delight in hunting, another in drinking, a third in swearing, lying, and cheating his neighbour; and neither of them seem delighted nor comforted but when they act thus;

* Psal. xlix. 8.

which not only ruins themselves, but has a bad tendency over the young, the thoughtless, and giddy part of mankind. I would advise such to read the forecited sixth chapter of 1 Cor. ix. 10. &c. verses; where it is said, "That no fornicator, nor adulterer, nor drunkard, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." This is not the path; this is not the way to heaven and eternal glory; but is the straight road to destruction.

It is not by superstition, nor idolatry. God will not give his glory to any other, nor his honour to graven images: Neither does he chuse that men should set up a ceremonial way of worship, seeing he saw it meet to abolish his own ceremonies, which were preferable to any other. Some men place the most of their religion and hopes of salvation in the acts of ceremony; much like the Pharisees of old, who "paid tythes of mint, &c. and neglected the weightier matters of the law." How many think all is safe and secure, who only, now and then, cringe at the altar, and bow when they name the blessed Jesus: But the apostle tells us, that this is the ready way to lose heaven and eternal glory.

AFTER having, in a few instances, shewed

you what is not, I shall next enquire which is the path that leadeth to glory.

THE way to heaven is by the pure righteousness of Jesus Christ. Our own righteousness is "but as filthy rags;" yet righteous we must be, if ever we expect to be happy. We must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ: His active and passive obedience must be made over to us; then shall the saint appear without spot or blemish. This justifies,—this saves him. The apostle Paul desired to be found; not clothed with his own righteousness, but with the righteousness of Christ Jesus. This, this is the true and only plain way to eternal glory, "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath. To whom shall we go but to him, for he has the words of eternal life." He is the "way," he is the "truth and life."

It is by faith, laying hold on Christ Jesus. There must be a fiducial receiving of Christ, otherwise we have no right to this life. They that do by faith unfeignedly lay hold on, and embrace Christ, "Shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Do every thing in your power, and pray to God

that your faith be of the right kind ; that it be a heart-purifying faith, which operates by love. If so, then it will be a proper mean to lay hold upon the only medicine,—the only remedy provided for the distempers of the sickly soul.

It is by self-denial and humility. There must be a denying of the world, and the things of the world ; nay, and in a great measure a denying of ourselves also, if we would chuse the right way to heaven, “ Love not the world, neither “ the things that are in the world ; if any man “ love the world, the love of the Father is not “ in him.” A love to the world, its riches and pleasures, too, too often lead us beyond our commanded duty ; and, if not guarded against, will in the last prove the means of our own destruction, “ He that loveth father or mother “ better than Christ, is not worthy of him.” Deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and holy, so shall ye be happy here, and eternally happy hereafter. If thus while ye live, you may depend upon it you are in the right path to heaven and eternal glory.

By diligence and constancy in duty. The great manner God Almighty respects you, arises

from your zeal in serving him constantly and with diligence; for he chuses no man to be idle cumberers of the ground who work in his vineyard; and commands them to “give the same diligence unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.” “It is the diligent hand that maketh rich,” even in the increase of worldly things; so also it is in spiritual things. The oftener a man reflects upon, and does his duty, the oftener will he desire to do it: The oftener a man has fellowship with God, the more will he long after him. There is no sitting idle, if heaven and eternal glory be the aim, for * *Heaven is taken by violence, and the violent take it by force.*

By laying aside all incumbrances that may hinder us in this race or journey. The course of a saint towards heaven is compared to a man running a race, who throws aside his cloaths, and every impediment that may tend to restrain him in his course. So must the Christian. The apostle Paul adviseth us to this, when he says “lay aside every weight and sin, which does so easily beset us, and let us run our Christian course with joy” and swiftness; for any, even the

* Matth. xi. 12.

smallest sin, if you will allow me the expression, mightily retards, clogs, and hinders us in our course towards eternal happiness.

THE way to heaven is by following peace and happiness. We must follow peace, and endeavour to promote it, though with many difficulties. David had many struggles and contests with his people, to keep peace among them: Often, when he was for peace, they were the more bent upon war. This too is the lot of the believer, who, when he proposes peace, and any healing method for the good of his soul, yet bad men will dissuade him from his purpose; which is a plain proof they are not in the right way. We must not, certainly, part with truth for peace' sake: This would be buying it at too dear a purchase; but you will find it necessary, as some have done, if your aim is at heaven, to lose something earthly by the purchasing of it, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness," in heart and life, "without which no man can see God." Maintain the purity of religion, in doctrine, worship, and government; this is the path,—this is the way to heaven.

SECOND, Where, or how God shews this path of life to his people.

IN his word and ordinances. They are called sometimes the wells of salvation, as they are refreshing to the believer in his way to eternal glory, “ Therefore with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Their thirsty souls shall be filled with divine grace and comfort: There you may plentifully draw from God in the use of gospel ordinances, which are often named figuratively by water, both in the Old and New Testaments. He seems to allude to the state of the Israelites in the wilderness, who, in their utmost extremity, and parching thirst, were miraculously provided for by God himself. So, in like manner, does God to his people, by directing them in his worship, by his word, in the path of life, “ But the water that I give,” saith he to the Samaritan, “ shall be a well of “ water springing up to eternal life.” In the same sense does God direct his people in the path of life, when he says, “ Search the scriptures, “ for in them ye think ye have eternal life;” as if he had said, You are right, in judging that the scriptures point out the way to eternal bliss and happiness. The scriptures certainly point out God’s design in saving us, and the way in order to bring us to himself, and to crown us with bliss inexpressible in the mansions of glory.

By his providence. God's providences are as so many plain demonstrations of what he would have us to do, that the believer, when acquainted with them, will find them not only useful, but necessary to lead him on in the path of life. God, in his providential dealings with the prodigal son, engaged him much to take the path that led to life. His providential dealings with the Samaritan woman engaged her to taste of the waters of life.

By his Spirit. The influence of the Spirit of God is absolutely necessary to direct us in our way towards heaven. If God leave us to the dictates of our own spirits, we shall soon deviate from the path that leadeth to God. David begged to be "directed by the Spirit;" for, says he, "thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness." The Spirit is often called the "spirit of council," because it affords the best counsel to the believer in journeying through life; and which will be a powerful mean to bring him to God at death. Let us then be earnest with God, that he would send forth his light and truth, whereby we may be conducted and led to the holy hill of Zion,—to the new Jerusalem,—that the Spirit of God may co-operate

with our spirits, so as we may be enabled to reach heaven and eternal happiness at God's right-hand.

By giving them the assurance of it. God gives his people grace here, which is "turned into glory hereafter." The good things which God's people enjoy in this life, is nothing but a prelibation of glory. When once they taste and enjoy the sweetness of the stream, they are led on to the fountain-head, "where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore." These are proper earnestness that never fail in being useful to the people of God in this journey. This is the "earnest of our inheritance." "These things being found in us to abound," we may have the fullest assurance that we are in the path that leadeth to those mansions of glory and blessing, which are prepared for us at God's right-hand, eternal in the heavens. I come now

THIRD, To lay down the nature of this happiness.

It is an inconceivable and incomprehensible happiness. Here we are at a stand to describe the true blessedness of the saints, because being so far beyond the comprehension of mortals: For "who are sufficient for these things?" who

can declare the one half of their glory and greatness. Does not the apostle Paul say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." God, however, hath been pleased to reveal much of this happiness, though not all, as not being immediately necessary. We are told, "we shall see God, even as we are seen; know, as we are known." This is what *I* cannot fully conceive; nor, I dare say, can any man else. For how is it possible for us to conceive this, and know God, when, alas! we do not half know ourselves; and, in a small degree, any thing else: And they that know most will think, one time or other, they have known but too little.

It is an excellent happiness. It is a happiness of such sort, as to excell all other kinds and degrees of happiness whatever; and therefore, very properly does the apostle speak, when he says, "Our light afflictions," which are here but for a moment, "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It is a happiness of that sort which overbalances all the troubles, afflictions, and opposition which we are liable to, and often have to encounter

in the path to heaven. But the excellency of this happiness will further appear, when we consider,

THAT it is an unmixed, or, an uninterrupted happiness. Herein it is different from the bliss or happiness the world affords. Men may propose a great deal of satisfaction in what they enjoy, but how often are they deceived? Have they not innumerable inconveniences to wrestle with; and will not the too great anxiety about these prove a gnawing worm in their conscience? And even at best, are they not beset about with bad men? Many afflictions, tears and sorrows are their companions through this life. But O happy hereafter! blessed state! where "all tears are wiped away:" Where "they rest from all their labours." There, even in heaven, are no mixture of grief and sorrow for the death of a relation, nor friend: Nothing but joy and rejoicing shall be heard before the Lamb, who sits in the midst of the throne at God's right-hand.

IT is an eternal happiness. In this respect too it is distinguished from all other worldly enjoyments. If the damned in hell are in everlasting torment,—in perpetual burning; reasonable it is the believer should be "ever with the Lord."

This is what we are *now* pursuing after, and what we are in hope of possessing *then*. Any happiness man may propose to himself, from the fading vanities of this world, are but short-lived:—What wicked men possess, soon fades away: Either the world is taken from them, or they are taken from the world. The rich man in the gospel had large possessions, innumerable treasures, and well stored barns, in which was laid up his very *soul*, to which he promised a lasting happiness for many years: But the early summons,—the short sentence blasted all his hopes; “Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required, and whose shall these be.” Death, at one stroke, deprived him of his proffered happiness, and—of his life.

It is an honourable and glorious happiness. Honour and glory is the pursuit of most men; the applause from men is pleasing to more: But here is an infinitely more glorious and honourable state than this world can produce. Heaven, and all that is contained therein, seem to conspire together in making God's habitation truly glorious. What is said by the psalmist, “That the king's daughter is all glorious within,” may, in an eminent degree, be applied to the happiness of the saints above. After we arrive at the highest

spiritual endowments in this world, yet they come far short of that glory which is in heaven at God's right-hand, where our persons shall be changed, and both soul and body become more active for God, and distinguished with greater glory: That inward worm which infested the soul in this world, is then totally done away: As for our bodies, the apostle says, they are "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body."

It is an honourable happiness, if we consider the company and the place where they enjoy it. In the heaven of heavens, and in the presence of God and his holy angels; for they "shall be for ever with the Lord, and always behold his glory," and shall be for ever freed from every molestation of their enemies; and from all the snares and intrigues of a wicked world: For all who are "now troubled shall rest with Christ."

This happiness is honourable, if we consider the relation the believer stands in with God, who are as children, heirs, kings, and priests to the Most High for ever.

The work they are employed in renders it pleasant and profitable. It is certainly the most glorious work that a gracious soul can be em-

ployed in, to join in the choir of the angels and glorified saints, in singing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb: And to cry out with the prophet of old, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of heaven and earth, for thou art surrounded with glory and honour." Men in this world many times deceive themselves with the thoughts of their happiness: They imagine, that to be exalted in worldly pomp, grandeur, and employment, is the very essence of happiness; but herein they are deceived: But the happiness resulting from an upright mind, a clear conscience, and a godly life, never deceives any who enjoy it. There is not even any happiness can equal it, which is proved by the text, "At thy right hand are rivers of pleasure, and joy for evermore." The world can afford no such joy as this, neither for pleasantness nor profitableness; neither for quantity nor quality. Here the saints are only masters and servants; hereafter they are priests and kings, "Come, ye blessed of the Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

FOURTH, I am now to conclude with some application.

FROM what has been said, we are informed

of the true state and happiness of the saints in glory. It is life, yea, it is eternal life, as it is frequently called in scripture, "The righteous shall go into life eternal." So it is compared with our short life in this world, and is put in opposition to the eternal punishment, or death, that the damned are in: For then "the righteous are freed from sin."

It informs us of the way to obtain this life; which is, by God's direction and appointment, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life." It is by the guidance of God, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that ever we attain heaven. It informs us of the fulness of God's grace in our salvation. Heaven can never be attained to by any merit in ourselves, but it is by the direction of God, "who giveth grace and glory," that entitles us to a share of that happiness which is at his right-hand.

It informs us of the certainty of obtaining this life, "Thou wilt shew it:" As if he had said, "I know that thou wilt not leave me, nor forsake me, in the state of the dead. Thou wilt conduct me while here, and afterwards bring me to glory. For I know that my Redeemer liveth." The words of the text, and what

has been advanced from them, reproves them who prefer their own way to the direction of the Almighty God's, in order to attain eternal life. Some men will follow their own evil and wicked inventions, let the result be what it may ; and will not be convinced of their error till too late ; till they shall here God say to them, " Depart
 " from me, I know you not ; you would none
 " of my counsel, therefore you shall reap the
 " fruit of your doings."

It reproves those who are more anxious about the things of this life, than in procuring the things which belong to eternal life. Too many, I am afraid, are of Martha's temper and disposition, who cumber themselves about many things, yet neglect the one thing needful. How many are there who give all their time and application to the things of a present state, and never think of providing for a future. The true believer shall enjoy life eternal, and never taste of the " second death ;" for they alone have a right to life everlasting, and they alone shall enjoy it.

It is much to be lamented, and is matter of great sorrow, to reflect, how much men despise this hidden treasure, that they will not take the right mean in order to accomplish the right end.

May not our Saviour's complaint be still applied to us, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." Men too, too often despise both the happiness here spoken of, and the only path which leadeth to it. If heaven and eternal happiness be the only object of your pursuits, then rest assured "all other things shall be added to you." Seek after heaven, and the greatest blessings shall follow you.

If the happiness of the saints be such as has been described; then it informs us, that the happiness they enjoy in heaven infinitely transcends all worldly pomp, greatness, and grandeur whatever: The world is but "vanity and vexation," but heaven is a place of lasting happiness.

It is not possible to expect perfect happiness in this world, nor until we are placed upon the right-hand of God in the morning of the resurrection; then shall we be initiated into a state of perfect happiness. We cannot expect peace, happiness, joy, nor comfort in a world where there is nothing but "tribulation and distress;" but we are directed to "look forward to that world where all our troubles shall for ever cease."

THOU wilt shew me the path of life. Under

all your losses and crosses, trusting in God, he will direct your path. In all difficulties, he will bring you to a safe retreat from all your enemies: He will free you, and at last make you quiet possessors of the joy which is in his presence, and the happiness which is continually at his right-hand.

S E R M O N X.

I CORINTHIANS vi. 20.

*Therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your
spirits, which are God's.*

THE apostle, in the former part of this chapter, reprimands the Corinthians for a gross fault which was committed by them, in going to law with one another before the heathen, whom he here calls in the first verse *unjust*. He tells them, that the better way was, to refer their cause to the faints, who would give a just

decision in their councils. And indeed, considering that the saints are to judge the earth at the latter end, he tells them, that it seemed reasonable they should judge in these smaller matters of controversies between brother and brother; that it is much more becoming they should decide their differences, than foolishly to run to law among the heathen and unjust judges. He further tells them, that such a practice was a scandal to the Christian religion; and upbraids, and reproveth them sharply on that account. From the ninth verse, and downwards, he dissuades them from all impious and obscene actions; telling them that such would not inherit the kingdom of heaven: He particularly declaims against all fornicators and idolaters, by several arguments; and then adviseth them to fly fornication, to shun all appearance of, and temptations to it. He concludes the chapter, by laying down our duty to God, as in the words of the text, “Therefore, glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are Gods;” and a very suitable conclusion it is from the premises. A strong use of argument is here plainly evident. If we are not our own, but the Lord’s, then it is but reasonable to serve him, and not live entirely to ourselves,—to glorify him both with our bodies and souls. The general meaning of these

words may be gathered from the following heads :

1st, T H E duty exhorted to,—glorify God. Glorifying of God does not signify the adding any thing to his essential perfections, felicity, or real glory. It is not to make God more glorious than he is, for he is incapable of receiving the least addition to his essential glory ; he being eternally and infinitely perfect and glorious, being “ Our Father which is in heaven.” But glorifying of God is, to manifest his glory, as all the creatures do, that have neither religion nor reason ; for “ the heavens declare God’s glory, “ and the firmament shew forth his handy works.”

2^d, T H E way how this duty should be performed. In your body, and in your spirit. Let neither of these be prostituted to vile purposes, but let them be employed in God’s service. Body and spirit being put for the whole man or person, we must serve him with both ; for he has an undoubted right and title to them : Or separately, glorifying God with the body and spirit : —With our bodies, by external purity and exemplary sanctity :—With our spirits, by internal purity of heart. This, I think, is the express meaning of the text.

3^d, T H E arguments or motives to press this

D d

exhortation. Both bodies and spirits are God's; therefore he ought to be glorified by both, "We are not our own, we are bought with a price." On this account, if there were none other, we should glorify God. From these arguments, it appears plainly and manifestly more reasonable, that we should rather be the Lord's servants, than the devil's bond-slaves.

It is certainly our incumbent duty to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits;—or internally in our hearts, and externally in our lives.

THE glorifying of God being the end of man, and the whole creation, it must of necessity be the highest duty of our lives; and if so, then surely it must be our incumbent duty, in which there ought not, must not be any neglect. Agreeable to this are the words of the same apostle, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Man's chief end, says our single catechism, is to glorify God; other subordinate and inferior ends we may have; but this, even the glorifying God, ought to devour all other ends, as "Moses serpent did the forcerers's."

In further discoursing upon the words of the text, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. How we should glorify God externally in our lives, or bodies.

II. How we should glorify God internally in our spirits, or souls.

III. OFFER some reasons why we should thus glorify God.

IV. CONCLUDE with some application.

FIRST, I am to shew how we should glorify God externally in our lives, or bodies.

THIS is not confining our glorifying God only to our bodily actions; for in part, if not in all, our spirits must be concerned: Though, certainly, in these heads, to which we are immediately to speak, the body must be present: The question then is, How we may glorify God in our outward actions, or in our lives?

WE should glorify God in our lives, by performing the duties of religion which he hath enjoined us. This will shew forth to the world that we have a respect to him, as well as a regard to the performing of our duty; for whomsoever man he is that performs his duty, does in effect

say, I honour, love, and esteem him who alone is worthy of my most sincere affection—God. When we are diligent in the way of our duty, it tends as a mean to glorify and honour God; because it is a bringing forth of that fruit which is the product of a new change, and of the second birth, of which God should have the glory. Man, by manuring and cultivating the ground, reaps the praise of his works from his neighbours, and the very ground itself, by bringing forth abundantly, bespeaks the diligence, care, and industry of the master. So in like manner do we glorify and honour God, by performing our duty; by doing which, we testify the great esteem and regard we have to him and his commands: As saith the evangelist John, * *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.* Indeed, Christians, we may be ashamed, when we consider how far we fall short in glorifying God, in duty to, and acknowledging of him. It may but too justly be said, that the inanimate part of creation exceed us in this; for “the
“ heavens declare his glory, and shew forth his
“ handy works; Day unto day uttereth speech,
“ and night unto night teacheth knowledge.” Nay, the very *brutes*, in this respect, far surpass many professors of religion; and do more to

* John xv, 8.

wards the advancing the honour of their masters, than we to manifest the glory of God: For saith the holy prophet, "The ox knoweth his owner, " and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath " not known, my people doth not consider."

I SHALL here enumerate some of the duties in which we should glorify God.

WE may glorify him by praise. Singing psalms and praises unto God are testimonies of our joy and delight in, as well as a steady faith and adherence to him. Singing is a sign of mirth and joy; and spiritual songs are signs of spiritual joy, "Is any man merry amongst you, let him " sing psalms." It is a sign of having a love to the state, wherein the blessed saints are continually employed in singing hallelujahs to their God and Redeemer: As saith the psalmist, * *Who-so offereth praise, glorifieth me: And to him that ordereth his conversations aright, will I shew the salvation of God.* He who is employed in praising God has a continual feast; and the mirth arising from it operates upon his spirit, like medicine upon the body; this certainly must be glorifying God. It must be; because it has for its object, the highest, even the excellencies

* Psal. l. 23,

of God. Thanksgiving is somewhat lower than praise ; as it has more respect to ourselves, and to the benefits received : But praise more directly terminates in the perfections of God. It must be ; because it is the work and employ of the most excellent creatures of God, the glorified saints and holy angels, who, by way of praise, proclaim, “ Glory be to God in the highest.” It must be ; because it is the work of heaven ; therefore, praising of God must be a glorifying of him ; and that praise is certainly best, which is nighest heaven :—There they rest not day nor night, saying, “ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God “ Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come ; “ thou art worthy to receive glory, honour, and “ power.”

WE may glorify God in the duty of prayer. Prayer is an owning and acknowledging of God, his perfections, and his attributes. I do not say that every prayer glorifies God ; no, my dear friends ; some prayers, instead of glorifying, dishonour him : And I don't see, but all those prayers, that are not put up in the name of Christ, rather detract from, than add any thing to the glory, wisdom, and goodness of God : We have our Saviour's own word for it, that we shall be heard if we pray in his name, “ Whatsoever ye

“ shall ask in my name that will I do, that the
“ Father may be glorified in the Son.” Would
ye have your prayers accepted by God?—pray in
the name of Christ. Would you have God glo-
rified by prayer?—pray in Christ’s name, and for
his sake, “ Do all in the name of the Lord Je-
“ sus, giving thanks to God and to the Father
“ by him.”

WE may glorify God in our lives, by having
heavenly lives and conversation : For, the more
of heaven operates in our lives, the more will
our life glorify God. Worldly and carnal men
are conscious that their glory is perishable, and
that their pleasures are transient and vain; and
that all their honours, wealth, and power will
shortly leave them, when they return to the dust ;
and therefore, they are forced sometimes, in de-
spight of their sensuality, to bear some reverence
to the life to come. And though they have not
hearts to deny, that their worldly pursuits and
pleasures are sinful ; and to spend their days in pre-
paring for eternity, and in laying up treasures in
heaven, are profitable ; yet they are convinced
that these who do so are the best and wisest men ;
and are often wishing “ to die the death of the righ-
“ teous,” and that their “ last end may be like
“ his.” Let it appear from your pious lives,

that you are seeking a higher happiness than this world can afford you. As good Abraham did of old, "look for a city, that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Let it appear by your actions, that you design to take heaven by storm.

WE may glorify God in our lives, by living above the world. The contemning of the riches and honours of the world, and living above a worldlings life;—accounting those things as *dung* which he counts his greatest *gain*; and by which he loseth his own soul: This, certainly, is glorifying God; because it is a sure indication that we despise those childish and glittering toys; those transitory and visionary trifles, which never fail of becoming the Syrtis of the avaritious: But despising these, we look forward to those things which never fail of producing happiness to the believer; * *We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.* The believer tramples the world under his feet, while he looks with fixed eyes up to the celestial world, from "whence cometh his aid." He is indifferent, whether, in this world, his usage be kind or unkind; whe-

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

ther, for so short a time, he be rich or poor; in a high or low degree, farther than it tendeth to his master's interest and service. Believers should let the world see, and "herein is God glorified," that they have their hearts, hopes, and affections raised above a present world, and despise those very things upon which the worldly man builds all his hopes and comfort; who makes use of the Christian name only so far as it may serve his interest. This will certainly deceive him at last, and all who acts thus, as it casts an odium upon the Christian faith, and thereby dishonours the holy name of God, and the holy name which they usurp.

WE may glorify God in our lives, when we can quietly and fearfully enjoy ourselves, and seek him in the midst of dangers and difficulties. The martyrs who suffered for his sake, did in effect glorify him this way, which, for his sake, we must do also. Hereby it is evident, that we believe there is a God, and that "he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" that he is true and just;—that his promises are to be trusted, because "he is faithful." This gives glory to his name, to his veracity and power, as well as to his promise; and it shews, at the same time, a steady belief that God is able to

make them good, in despite of all the malice of their enemies. And that the threats of sinful worms are contemptible to him that fears God, “ So that a man shall say, verily, there is a reward for the righteous: Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” How did confidence in God, and the assurance of the great reward in heaven, make the three children undauntedly say, “ We are not careful, O king, to answer thee in this matter, the God whom we serve is able to deliver us.” To think that Christ is not to be trusted with, or is not capable to free our souls from death, certainly reproaches the faith, and dishonours him. But every person who trusteth in, does seek and serve him in the midst of dangers and difficulties, not only glorifies God himself, but sets a good example to others.

WE may glorify God in our lives, by living in a constant preparation for, and expectation of death. This shews forth to the world, that the believer has found good ground of hope that he can meet death, who is, to others, the king of terrors, as an adversary disarmed and conquered. This shews a triumphant, as well as a persevering and steady faith; and that “ godliness is not vain.” It must be something above na-

ture, that can make a man “ desire to depart, and
“ to be with Christ,” which he esteems much
better than to live. For faith the apostle, “ We
“ are confident, and willing, rather to be absent
“ from the body, and to be present with the
“ Lord.” Happy were it for us, if we had such
dispositions in us, and such a readiness to die,
and a faith in us which reacheth beyond the
grave ; if there were, then we should glorify
God in this life.

WE may glorify God in our lives, by living
humbly, meekly, and patiently. These honour
God and our profession, more than pride, passion,
and impenitence dishonour him. *Those* shew to
the world, and to men, that the Spirit of God is
in them, and tends effectually to cast down *these*,
which are the result of a devilish pride. The for-
mer makes us like our Master, who “ humbled
“ himself, and became obedient unto death, e-
“ ven the death of the cross,” and to the con-
tradiction and reproach of foolish sinners: The
latter proceeds from the devil, and adviseth to
nothing that is good. Those glorify God, be-
cause, proceeding from the Spirit of God, must
make men fall in love with God, who is of such
excellent perfections ; for “ the fruit of the Spi-
“ rit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meek-

“nefs, temperance,” &c. It is not by a man’s standing upon his honour, and keeping his word with respect to the things of this world, that glorifies God ; but it is when he becomes as a little child, and as nothing in his own eyes, and seeks not the honour that is of men ; but who say, “not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory and praise.” When you can be angry and sin not, and give place to wrath, and to be of a meek and lowly life ; then it will appear how much you glorify God in your bodies or lives.

A LIFE of love and good works is a life that glorifies God. We should love the godly with a pure and unmixed love ; but other men only with so much love as may make us earnestly desire their welfare ; and to love our enemies, put up with wrongs and injuries, study to do good to all, and hurt to none. To abound in love is to be like God, who is “love itself.” This is the way that all men shall know that ye are the followers and disciples of Christ, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” Do all the good in your power, live in the imitation of him, whose mercies are far above all his other works.

WE do glorify God in our lives, by living a life of peace, concord, and unity. This not only glorifies God, but our own profession also. Men will reverence that God which we unanimously serve, and that faith which we chearfully and unitedly accord in; and the same men will despise both it and us, and be in danger of despising God also, when they see us go by the ears, and hear us in a rabble of confusion; and one crying this is the way, and another crying this is the way; one saying this is the church, and another saying this is the meeting-house. This conduct is far from the characteristic of a believer,—this is not the way to glorify God.

To live in love and unity recommends us to God, and is attended with the greatest reward, “Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see God,” which is the same thing as if he had said, If you follow peace, live in unity and concord, and endeavour to be holy, ye shall see the Lord,—ye shall glorify God in your lives.

WE do glorify God in our lives, when we live honestly, and do justly amongst men. Justice, communicative and distributive, public and private, in bargaining, government, and judgment,

doth honour and glorify God in the eyes of all men. When we do wrong to no man, but “do unto others as we would they should do unto us;” and when we take the apostle’s advice, “that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter.” A man’s word should be his master, and should oblige him, and bind him as doth an oath. We should not lie one to another, nor equivocate, nor deal subtly nor deceitfully, but in “plainness and singleness of heart,” and in “simplicity, and godly sincerity, have our conversation in this world.” If so, then our lives will be honest, and our conversation holy. This will, in a great measure, be a powerful mean to work upon others, and oblige them also to glorify God, “Having your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

WE glorify God in our lives, when we abstain from vicious practices and sinful courses. This also manifests to the world, that we have a great regard for God, who is the prohibitor of all sin, and who forbids the violation of his laws. When we abstain from, and shun all temptations to sin,

Joseph was an example in this case, who fled from the many and powerful solicitations of his carnal mistress, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." When solicited to drink with the drunkard, to swear with the swearer, to lie with the liar, to profane the Sabbath with profane persons; and when tempted to whoredom, adultery, &c. endeavour seriously to make the same reply with Joseph, and say, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."

WE glorify God in our lives, or bodies, when we have all our powers and members employed in his service. This is a very reasonable service, because it is only serving God with his own: So it also strengthens our regard for God. This is the way God's people have, and are employed, by having their powers and faculties all engaged in advancing his glory, reading his word, and by taking their eyes off from beholding vanity; and who have, like the psalmist, "their eyes ever towards the Lord." The psalmist often speaks of the eyes of his mind being employed in giving glory to God, which may be here very well understood of his bodily eyes, because he took such delight in God's word, that he frequently and fervently read it: And the result of his medita-

tion was, a prayer put up to God to this effect,
 “ Turn away mine eyes, O Lord, from view-
 “ ing vanity, and I will speak of the glorious
 “ honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous
 “ works, and declare thy greatness.”

SECOND, How we should glorify God internally with our souls, or in our spirits.

THIS is indeed the *primum mobile*, or first mover to the externally glorifying of God ; as it is far from being probable that our lives and actions will glorify him, we ought to consider well the frames and dispositions of our hearts, and endeavour to keep a strict watch over them, least, by an impure heart, we give too much indulgence to our lives, and by this mean, dishonour, instead of honouring and glorifying God. Therefore let us glorify God internally, by

ABHORING all blasphemous representations, or mean and undeserving thoughts of God. This is, to think calmly of God, to judge and conceive of him as we ought to do. As no man can possibly comprehend God, he ought therefore reverently to admire him : And if the devil, or a wicked world, should tempt any believer to think meanly of God, or any of his works ; or

to admire one, and think lightly of another of his perfections,—fly such temptations. The serpent, when tempting Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with soothing words said, “ For God doth know, “ that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall “ be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing “ good and evil,” represents God very unequally to her, as if God had only a design to cheat them out of happiness; as if he were “ a “ God that would lie ;” or as if it were possible for any of the creatures to attain to infinite perfection,—to be equal to God. This flattery, however, prevailed with the woman, who, no doubt, had too undervaluing thoughts of God, by thinking she might attain to be his equal. By-the-by, we may observe, that besides the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, there was pride and blasphemy attended that sin. How did Pharaoh and Senacherib meanly and blasphemously conceive of God, if we may judge their thoughts by their words, “ Who is the Lord that I should “ obey his voice ?” And how does Senacherib vilify God, by representing him even to be weaker than man, and meaner than the heathen gods, who were but stocks and stones. Abhor such blasphemous and impious conceptions of God as

these, if so be ye are willing to glorify him internally, or with your spirits.

GLORIFY God internally, by having suitable, reverend, and admired thoughts of his infinite perfections; considering him as an incomprehensible being; a God that cannot be found out; as Zophar and Eliphaz, Job's two friends asserted, "Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection." And saith Job himself, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not afflict." Endeavour to have reverential thoughts of God, and true conceptions of his holy name and nature; and say with the prophet Isaiah, "Woe is me, I am undone; mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts:" And where you cannot conceive of him, there, and then, admire and adore him. Conceive of him as incomprehensible and infinite, and then you glorify his perfections and excellent nature.

GLORIFY God in your spirits, by highly admiring his perfections, which are evident in the works of nature and grace. Behold God in all these, as the only and sole mover of the whole creation. Admire his power, that made, and

still preserves the many systems of worlds : Glorify his wisdom, that set in joint, as it were, the universal frame of heaven and earth, and that keeps all things moving in due order ; for on this account it is that the heavenly host glorify God, * *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* How good must he be who made all good, and who gave all the creatures their goodness, both natural and spiritual, by creation, and by renovation, as renewed by his grace. For he is not only good in himself, but he is continually doing good unto all : The whole creation are more or less sharers of his bounty in common, but his goodness to his own is wonderful, and is the product of infinite love.

GLORIFY God in your spirits, by having glorious conceptions of Jesus Christ. He who glorifies and honours Christ, glorifies and honours God : For our blessed Saviour was not only the Father's son, but the express image of his person. Behold God then in the person of Christ Jesus, in his miracles, resurrection, dominion, and glory. By and through him it is that glory is given to God in the church. He who glorifies the love

* Rev. iv. 11.

of Christ in dying for sinners, must also glorify the love of God, in contriving, and in bringing about our salvation after this manner. Let us then glorify God in the Son; in our spirits, by loving the Son, who, out of pure love, has provided for us, and in love gave himself up to the death for fallen man, “ Even as all men honour “ the Father, so also should they honour the “ Son: He that honoureth not the Son, honour-eth not the Father.” Love God above every thing; by this you testify the image of God to be stamped upon you; for “ he that loveth not, “ knoweth not God; for God is love.” Our loving the people of God is a good sign of love to God himself: If we love God, then we will love them who bear his image. But the highest love and affection to God, as it is our duty, so it has been the praise of the saints, and it is a glorifying of God in our spirits. Thus Peter declared his love to Christ; and, as I have said, they who love and honour Christ, also love and honour God, “ Lord, thou knowest all things, “ thou knowest that I love thee.” He appeal-eth to the searcher of hearts to witness the sincerity of his love.

GLORIFY God in your spirits, by a steady faith in, and a confident adherence to him. Let

faith be exercised in your prayers, and in your religious performances; then shall your prayers be offered up with more zeal, more warmth, and with more awe and reverence. You will then pray as if you saw him, and dare to take his name in vain; not in a common manner, as of other common things. And seeing the invisible God by faith, you, like Moses, condemn the world and its vanities, “For by faith Moses
“forsook the land of Egypt, not fearing the
“wrath of the king: For he endured, as seeing
“him who is invisible.” The strength of faith made Moses fearless of his enemies, the Egyptians; and it is faith that was the occasion of God’s being glorified afterwards, over the Egyptians, in their destruction, and in the deliverance of his own people, the Israelites, although the action itself was a mental or spiritual glorification of God: Because to him it was as a sign of his truth in God’s faithfulness, power, ability, and mercy; though to us, his faith could be evidenced but by his actions.

GLORIFY God in your spirits, by often thinking of him as in heaven, where he is revealed in glory to the blessed, and magnified by their high and everlasting praise. Nothing does so much help us to glorify God in our minds as by

faith to behold him where he is most glorious. The very reading over the description of the New Jerusalem * will much affect a true believer. Suppose, with Daniel, we saw heaven opened, and "the ancient of days," the *great* JEHOVAH, gloriously illustrating the city of God, and Jesus in glory at his right-hand, and the innumerable company of glorified spirits and angels before his throne, praising and magnifying God with the highest admiration, and joyful acclamations of which beings are capable; would it not inspire in us some of the same exalted sentiments of admiration? If we would often and seriously reflect, what that "seeing of God as he is" meant; it would raise in our thoughts the same exalted sentiments, and the same admiration which the saints enjoy in heaven; it would tend to make us long to know "even as we are known. For "now we see through a glass darkly, but then "face to face; now I know but in part, but "then shall I know even as I am known." For we know, that when he shall "appear, we "shall be like him; for we shall see him as he "is." I say, often to think of God, as revealed to the blessed, and as they are allowed to enjoy him, should be a mean, not only to make us glorify him in our spirits and lives, but also to

* Rev, xxi. 22,

make us “long to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.”

GLORIFY God in your spirits, by abhorring all doctrines that blaspheme or dishonour the name of God; or that would blemish or hide the glory of his majesty. This is a testimony of your love to God, as well as a detestation of those errors: And these you may abhor, without detesting the persons you may imagine guilty of them. It is exceedingly dangerous, and it is sinning both against human nature, and revealed religion, to detest any man whatever. We ought to be very cautious too what things we call errors, and what they are that detract from the honour of God's name, and that cast a blemish upon his majesty, in order to darken his glory. We may, with good reason say, the doctrine of worshipping God by saints and angels has too great a tendency to it. Does it not in effect demonstrate, that Christ is an insufficient intercessor;—that God might have found out a better way, than by allowing us to come to him by Christ. Do such persons as they not say, and in doing so dishonour both God and Christ, that the angels and saints are suitable advocates to bring any man to eternal salvation. Take heed then to yourselves, by despising and rejecting such a doctrine, and

take the apostles advice, and “ let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels,” &c.

THIRD, I shall offer a few reasons why we should thus glorify God:

WE should glorify God both with soul and body, because he has a right to both by creation, “ He made us, and not we ourselves,” says the psalmist; “ and know ye that the Lord is indeed “ God.” This is the argument the psalmist makes use of to stir up all people to glorify God, by singing psalms of praise to him, and serving him both in public and private; for adds he, “ Ye “ are the sheep of his pasture, therefore enter “ his gates with thanksgiving, and serve the “ Lord with gladness.” This is as much as to say, “ God has made you to do so, as well as he has endowed you with better powers and faculties, whereby you are capable of doing it.” God made both soul and body; therefore serve him with both, “ which are only his.” For “ God “ hath made all things for himself.” There is an additional argument in these words,—he did not only make us all, but he made us all “ for “ himself;” that is, to serve and glorify him, “ God created man after his image, in the i-

“image of God created he him, male and female created he them.” The consideration of God’s love at first, in making us after his image, and our falling from the happy state in which we were, by our Creator, placed, should, methinks, be an additional argument to glorify his name; yet this, even this, is too often neglected by the creature, who never, or very seldom thinks upon the Creator.

WE should glorify God, because he has a right to us, by giving us our daily provision. It is he who sustaineth us. How soon should we moulder into our primitive nothing, if our kind benefactor did not give us those things which are necessary for our natural support: And this he does, that in gratitude we may be employed in his praise, and to glorify him alone, “Bless our God, ye people, which holdeth our souls in life. * O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before our Maker; for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. These are strong and powerful arguments used here by the psalmist, in order to engage us in, and to stir us up to glorify God. God’s care over his people is attended with wonderful effects in the way of preservation: He lead-

* Psal. xcv. 6. 7.

eth them where the pastures are green and nourishing, and near the quiet, cooling, and refreshing stream of pure water. When Elijah durst not stay for fear of Ahab, the Lord commanded the ravens to feed him near the brook Cherith, “ And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.” The more extraordinary God’s method of providing for us, the more are we obliged to glorify him. Was not Elijah more obliged to be faithful to his trust, and to his God, who was so eminently and miraculously provided for by the ravens which God commanded to feed him: But remember, if any person does not glorify God in his body and spirit, instead of having the ravens to feed, shall have them to destroy, and all other creatures likewise shall be engaged in his destruction.

WE should glorify God, because he has a right to us by redemption. He has bought us at the expence, and with the price of his Son’s blood; for “ ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ;” therefore glorify him in your bodies and spirits, “ Who gave his only begotten Son to redeem us from misery;” glorify him “ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from

“ all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar
“ people, zealous of good works.” God lets
us know, that we are not redeemed to serve our
own purposes, and pursue our own sinful incli-
nations; he had a more noble end in view,
that we should be zealous of good works, and
thereby glorify him in all things, “ who loved
“ us,” and gave up his “ Son unto death for
“ us,” to bring us to heaven and eternal happi-
ness.

WE should glorify God, because he has given
us his word to direct, his spirit to assist us in this
life, and hath promised us his kingdom in the
life to come. What can God do more to us,
and what can we more reasonably expect or de-
sire from the hand of the Almighty, either as
helps tending to glorify him, or as a reward for
so doing. The psalmist David made good use of
the word of God to this purpose, when he said,
“ He made it a light unto his feet, and a lanth-
“ orn to his path.” But God does not only
give us his word, but his Spirit, which renders
the word effectual, useful, and helpful “ to our
“ infirmities.” But I come now

FOURTH, To make some application.

FROM the words of the text, and what has

been advanced, it appears, that all those are re-proved who have some measure of the knowledge of God, yet do not glorify him as God. They, although they may have some knowledge of him, their lives are not agreeable to what they know and profess: For saith the apostle, " Because that
 " when they knew God, they glorified him not
 " as God : " They were on that account entirely without excuse ; nay, their knowledge of God aggravated all their other sins, and made them more heinous.

IT reproveth idolaters ; for instead of giving God the glory, they give it to the creature of man's forming. Instead of attributing to God that which he hath a chief hand in, they attribute it to the creature, who is subject to God. Instead of paying the homage due to the only living and true God, they pay it to lifeless stocks and stones. This is that very sin which God himself reproveth by the apostle ; for, says he, " they
 " changed the glory of the incorruptible God
 " into an image," &c.

IT reproveth all those who serve God with
 " their bodies, while their spirits are far from
 " him." I have already shewn you, that both body and soul are God's, and therefore he should

be served by, and in both. If so, then they deserve a very sharp, and severe reprimand, who do not give God his due, and serve him as they ought, with their bodies and souls which are his. How many amongst us, who, instead of serving, rather mock God. Our hearts are too often bent upon the world, or wandering upon the mountain of vanity, while they should be fixed upon the living God.

It reproves all manner of iniquity and wickedness. For as God is a God of infinite purity and holiness, so he hates all kind of sin, and every denomination of sinners. It is lamentable to see men so much taken up in the praise of the creature, and to have so little respect to the praise of the Creator. We are apt to say, such and such persons have done this or that great action, while we forget God who orders and disposes all things aright. Be entreated then, in the words of the text, “ To glorify God in your bodies
“ and spirits which are God’s.”

S E R M O N X I.

I C O R I N T H I A N S ii. 2.

*For I determined not to know any thing among you,
save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

CO R I N T H was a very opulent city of Greece, famous for its wealth, but infamous for abounding sin; especially pride, luxury, wantonness, and uncleanness. This is evident, from the apostle's arguing against those sins: It was here, however, that God had a church, and much people; one of the most eminent churches

in the world. For the conversion of whom, the apostle Paul was sent ; and staid with them a year and six months : Nevertheless, there were great divisions among the people : Some were for Paul, and others for Apollos ; some preferring flights of eloquence, and a fine rhetorical harangue, to the genuine simplicity of the gospel : And others said, that a stile simple and plain did best become the gospel of the adorable Redeemer. The apostle Paul takes all possible care and pains in order to prevent divisions amongst them. In this, and in the former chapter, he discovers to us the way how he studied Christ, and how he endeavoured to preach him to others. He informs us, that religion was not a matter of parts, words, or wit :—That the holy things of God must be handled with fear and reverence, rather than with wit, dalliance, or eloquence. Persons generally study things as they effect and love them. And alas ! as the world goes, and as men study, they undeniably evidence, that they are not so much of the apostle's mind as they ought : For he determined not to know any thing among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. In these words we have,

I. THE subject matter of the apostle's study and preaching.

IT was Jesus Christ, not Jewish traditions, nor the philosophy of the heathens, “ but him in
 “ whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and
 “ knowledge.” Paul had a greater value for the one than for the other, * *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord, &c.*

2. THE special consideration, and relation in what the apostle chuses to study and preach Christ Jesus; and that was as crucified. Christ above all other subjects, and crucified above all other considerations: Human wisdom was ready to pour contempt on the sufferings the Saviour endured; but there the apostle highly valued and employed his precious moments, in studying and preaching these, as the way whereby guilty and helpless sinners may obtain everlasting redemption, “ God forbid that I should glory,
 “ save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by
 “ whom the world is crucified unto me, and I
 “ unto the world.” “ Neither by the blood of
 “ goats and calves, but by his own blood, he
 “ entered in once into the holy place, having
 “ obtained eternal redemption for us.”

3. THE preference that the apostle gives to

* Philip. iii. 8.

this study, and this preaching, above all others, “ For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ,” &c. Though I be acquainted with the Jewish traditions, the Gentile philosophy, and the Heathen poets, yet these are not my principal study and business. I troubled you with none of these in my pulpit-discourses: My principal design was, to lead you to a crucified Jesus, who “ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” In discoursing from these words, we shall,

I. ENDEAVOUR to shew what is implied or imported in the apostle’s being determined.

II. WHAT of Christ men should determine to know; and particularly with respect to his being crucified.

III. WHAT is that knowledge of Christ which believers should strive to be acquainted with.

IV. REASONS why Christ and him crucified should be principally determined to be known by us. The

FIRST head was, to shew what is implied

H h

in the apostle's being determined not to know any thing, &c.

THAT he had duly considered Christ, and him crucified. Unthinking mortals sometimes come to a resolution, without being duly apprized of the nature, worth, and end of things; but men possessed of goodness of heart, when versant about good and great objects, must, nay, they cannot but consider with deliberation, before they determine. The more weighty the considerations are, so much the more are they resolved duly to consider, before they determine: This we find exemplified in the case of David, "While I was musing the fire burned: Then spake I with my tongue. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days," &c. The effect of David's consideration, was determination to supplicate the Most High. He resolves to pray; he determines that chiefly at this time, it was the fruit of his serious meditation: So I doubt not but Paul was of the same mind, when he determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, &c.

THAT the apostle Paul had the greatest value and esteem for Jesus Christ: This evidenced itself in all the apostle's life; his words, his actions,

are testimonies of this. Did he not forsake all to follow Jesus Christ the Lord: His former honours and dignities he did forego, when the divine Saviour called him; then a persecuting Saul became a preaching Paul: He therefore says, in the fore-quoted text, * *And I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, &c.* And in the 7th ver. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* There is every thing in Christ that may make us value and esteem him; therefore should we determine to know him. He is beautiful and comely: His ways are not only pleasant, but profitable, “ And this is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

It implies, that the apostle thought this knowledge necessary for the people: He certainly thus esteemed Christ in reference to them: Therefore it was, that he would not draw off their minds from the knowledge of Christ by any other knowledge. He determined not to use any other science or art; nor the words and language that were made use of in those arts: He thought it absolutely necessary for the people, so

* Phil. iii. 8.

he exhorts them to acquire this knowledge: The rest of the apostles were of the same mind, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." There is an emphasis in the word among you, as if the apostle should say, Though if called before the ruler, I can make my learning conspicuous; for I was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a learned Rabbi among the Jews; yet I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; for this knowledge is absolutely necessary to the complete salvation of our immortal spirits: This glorious surety confirms by his own declaration, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It is necessary for ministers to preach this doctrine, and it is necessary for the people to know and believe it. The

SECOND head of method was, to shew what of Christ we should determine to know; particularly with respect to his being crucified.

WE should determine to know Christ in his natures,—as God and man. The nature of any thing is, its intrinsic principle and essence, and that which constitutes it a being, and distinguisheth it

from other things. Thus the supreme Being is distinguished from man, and man from the brutes : Thus our blessed Saviour, as our Mediator, and Redeemer, in the mysterious union, in the divine and human natures, is distinguished from all. Yet he had two natures, is evident from the sacred oracles, “ And the word was made
“ flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld
“ his glory, the glory as of the only begotten
“ of the Father, full of grace and truth. For-
“ asmuch then as the children are partakers of
“ flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took
“ part of the same,” &c. In order that this doctrine may be better understood, we shall shew,

THAT Jesus Christ was God as well as man. Endeavour to explain this union. Shew the necessity of this union, or of Christ's being God and man.

THAT Christ was God. Isaiah, the evangelist of the Jewish church, calls him the mighty God, “ For unto us a child is born, unto us
“ a Son is given, and the government shall
“ be upon his shoulder: And his name shall be
“ called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God,
“ the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.”
“ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word

“ was with God, and the Word was God.”
 “ Whose are the fathers, and of whom as con-
 “ cerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all,
 “ God blessed for ever.”

THE properties of God are ascribed to him,
 “ As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts
 “ is his name,” &c. His eternity, “ Jesus said
 “ unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, be-
 “ fore Abraham was, I am.” Omnipresence,
 “ Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end
 “ of the world.”

THE works of God are attributed to him;
viz. creation, preservation, provision, sanctifica-
 tion, raising the dead, &c. “ Who being the bright-
 “ ness of his glory, and the express image of his
 “ person; and upholding all things by the word
 “ of his power,” &c. This proves beyond con-
 tradiction his deity, “ All things were made by
 “ him, and without him was not any thing made
 “ that was made.”

THE same honour and worship is given to
 Christ that is due to God, “ When he bringeth
 “ in his first begotten into the world, he saith,
 “ and let all the angels of God worship him.”
 Adoration and invocation, “ Unto the church of

“ God which is at Corinth, to them that are
“ sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,
“ with all that in every place call upon the name
“ of Jesus Christ our Lord.” From whence we
may necessarily conclude that he is God equal
with the Father. As to the second, some re-
marks on the union of the two natures of God
and man.

THAT the union of the human nature was with
the second person in the blessed Trinity, and not
with the first or third: For although they do
not differ in essence and nature, yet they differ
in their personal properties; by these they are
distinguished from each other: And although the
divine nature may be said to be incarnate in the
Son, yet it doth not follow that the whole Tri-
nity is incarnate. The divine nature is only in-
carnate in the Son; for it is a personal, not a
natural work; absolutely and comprehensively
speaking of the divine nature. It is intuitively
the work of the whole Trinity, but subjectively
the work of the Son properly, * *Who being in the
form of God, yet made himself of no reputation, &c.*
This is spoken of Christ Jesus; and it was requi-
site that the second person in the Trinity should
be incarnate: Because Jesus is the middle person

* Philip. ii. 6.

in the God-head or Trinity, so the most proper to be middle person or days-man betwixt God and man.

THAT the divine and human natures are not two persons, but one; two distinct natures they are, but one person for ever. This is not a physical union, but a hypostatical one, in assuming the human nature into personal union with his divine nature, "For," saith the apostle, "Christ" also hath once suffered for sins, the just for "the unjust, that he might bring us to God; "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." There is the union between the two natures: The human nature subsists under the divine, and the Spirit quickens the flesh.

THE properties of each nature remains the same. The divine nature is, from eternity, immutable and immortal; the human, mortal and changeable. And it must be so; for the divine essence cannot be communicated to any creature; because all the properties of the divine nature are inseparable. As to the third,—the necessity of this union, *viz.* of Christ's being God and man.

It was necessary that he should be man, in order that he might be capable of tasting death. As God, he could not suffer; and without suffering death, no salvation could be obtained for guilty sinners, * “Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.”

It was necessary he should be God; that he might satisfy the claims of inflexible justice: Had he been a mere man, his sufferings had been but of a finite extent, and so could not have made complete satisfaction to God's infinite justice, that was offended by sin; therefore it may be justly said, that “God has purchased the church with his own blood.”

HE must be man, that so we might have a suitable high priest to reconcile us to God. It would have been better to have had none, than not to have had a suitable one: But Christ Jesus was altogether fitted for us, “It behoved him to be made like to his brethren, that we might have a merciful high priest.” Had he been one that could not be sensible of our infirmities, he could not have been so suitable to us: But Christ Jesus, in assuming our nature, became acquainted with our infirmities, “For we

* See HURRION upon the same text.

“ have not an high priest which cannot be touch-
 “ ed with the feeling of our infirmities; but was
 “ in all points tempted like as we are, yet with-
 “ out sin.”

IT was necessary that he should be God, that so he might support the human nature under sufferings. Without the divine power, the human nature had shrunk under the weight of sin; and would have crushed it too low to be a suitable Saviour. In short, he is God-man, that he might be a suitable Saviour, as really he was.

WE should determine to know Christ in his offices, as clothed with a threefold office,—of a prophet, priest, and king; and as he is therein serviceable to sinners. None can take him in his offices, till they first know him in them: As a prophet, he reveals our duty to us; as a priest, he makes way by his atoning blood for us; and as a king, he rules and defends us.

THESE offices were answerable to man's threefold misery; viz. ignorance, guilt, and servitude to sin: Ignorance, he dispels by prophetic light; guilt, he heals as a priest; and as a king, he saves us from the tyranny of sin. These seem all to be taken notice of in *Psal.* cxx. throughout. “ I am the way, and the truth,

“and the life,” &c. “The Lord thy God
 “will raise up unto thee a prophet from the
 “midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me,
 “unto him shall ye hearken.” His kingly of-
 fice is farther asserted, **Yet have I set my king
 upon my holy hill of Sion.*

WE should determine to know Christ in his sufferings. His state of humiliation was such, as that from the womb to the tomb he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Here consider what he suffered in his name and reputation: He was given up to the scorn and derision of his enemies; he was called a friend of Publicans and sinners; a wine bibber; nay, reproached as a devil: In this respect there was no eye to pity him; but rather derided and mocked him. What he suffered in his soul. This was, as some say, the soul of his sufferings; for it did suffer; not as bearing a sympathy with the body only, but as immediately stricken and smitten. It surely must have been a fearful agony he was in, when he cried out, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” &c.

CONSIDER him as crucified. What he suffered in his body before, was nothing to what he

* Psal. ii, 6

suffered now at his openly shewing of himself. O know him in this, so as to love him. Can you not part with sin,—shed a tear for one that loved you, even unto the death? O see how his blessed head was pricked with thorns; how his sides were pierced, and his body crucified on the accursed tree. This was the knowledge the apostle was desirous of, and under this consideration he resolves to know Christ, “ I determine not to know
 “ any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and
 “ him crucified.”

WE should determine to know Christ in his exaltation, as well as in his humiliation: Know him now as sitting at the Father's right-hand, above all principality and power, as our righteous advocate, and everlasting intercessor, “ Whom
 “ God hath raised up, having loosed the pains
 “ of death; because it was not possible that he
 “ should be holden of it,”

WE should determine to know Christ in his offers. To be duly acquainted with him in these, may not a little tend to our embracing of him, to our everlasting salvation. Know, that he offers himself so freely, and fully too—that all true penitents have this offer made to them, * *Ho, e-*

* Isa. lv. 1.

very one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c.
“Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. In the last day of the feast, Jesus cried, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.” You see here is an ample offer of Christ Jesus to thirsty souls. O endeavour to have such frames: Pray that God may give you spiritual appetites for these heavenly dainties.

THIRD, What sort of knowledge of Christ believers should strive to be acquainted with.

It should be an obediential and practical knowledge which we ought to have of Christ. Practical and obediential knowledge I take to be the same; for there is no true obedience where practice or actions do not evidence it; and there is no true knowledge of Jesus where obedience is not the fruit of it. It is not enough that we have a speculative notion of Christ: This is little better than a historical faith in the devils, that are far from obeying Christ, or practising duty. We must do what Christ enjoins, as well as call him Lord, “And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say.” Ye must subject yourselves to me in the way of obedience, as well as make a profession of my name. This o-

bedience, though it cannot be perfect as to the degrees, yet it must evidence itself by special marks: For "They that know their master's will, " and does it not, is beaten with many stripes." This obedience must be an universal obedience to all the commandments of God; to these they must have a sincere respect, and must obey the second, as well as the first table of the law. We are not to cheat and circumvent our neighbours, no more than to bow down to an idol; this is the way to have much confidence, "Then " shall I not be ashamed, when I have a respect " to all thy commandments." Consider, he that breaks one, is guilty of them all; he is liable to the punishment due to all.

A *CONSTANT* obedience, not by fits and starts. We should resolve that this knowledge of Christ should constantly engage us to duty; and not to follow him like these that walked no more with Jesus. Others are highly commended for their stedfast adherence to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, "These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, &c.

A *SINCERE* obedience. This is near allied to the former heads, and seems to comprehend them. This the supreme Creator requires and

loves, "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." Sincerity is known by its continuance, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

It should be an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ that we should determine to have: It is not enough to know Christ in his threefold offices, and two natures, and that he offers himself; but we should press to know that he is our Saviour, that we take him in his offices and offers too. How earnestly does the apostle desire such a knowledge, "That I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and be conformable to his death." This would be to "taste that the Lord is gracious."

It should be a transforming knowledge of Christ that we should press after: This is a most powerful knowledge; for then they that sat in darkness see a great light: Nay, then are we light and life in the Lord. Then does it change our minds, * *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds.* When men are thus renewed, they will have different views from what they formerly had: Sin will appear in its true colours, and be detested: God will be loved, Christ will be imitated, his law will be obeyed, his word

* Rom. xii. 2.

studied, and evil company will be shunned; in short, the life then, as well as the mind, will be amended and transformed:

IT should be an affectionate knowledge; *i. e.* this knowledge should stir us up to love him, as well as to obey him;—to have a high value for him. Unless we endeavour to know Christ, we will not, nor cannot prize him; but when known, then they say, nothing “shall separate us from his love.” How great was Peter’s love, “Thou knowest I love thee.” Faith works by love, and they who are destitute of it are still in the “gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” This love will be conspicuous to every beholder; for it will pay a willing obedience to the commandments of God, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” It will likewise evidence itself, by being grieved when the name of God is dishonoured, either by swearing, lying, covetousness, or uncleanness, &c. And by longing for intimations of his love, their language is, “Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.” And by loving his people; this is a testimony of the new birth, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

It should be a humbling, and self-abasing knowledge; *i. e.* this knowledge should make us have low thoughts of ourselves; and when it has made this impression upon us, then we will adopt the language of the prophet, “Wo is me, “ for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: For mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts.” It will make us content to part with all to win this knowledge. A proud man is so conceited, that he will not part with nothing for Christ; it is quite otherwise with the pious soul, “I count all things dung to win Christ. He sold all and bought it.”

It should be a growing and progressive knowledge. We should duely be endeavouring to be better acquainted with Jesus Christ, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” When the believer gets any saving knowledge of him, he will be desirous of more acquaintance with him; he will long to be where he may hear of Christ, by the preaching of the word, and the influences of the Spirit. The

FOURTH head was, the reasons why Christ,

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and him crucified, should be principally determined to be known by us.

BECAUSE it is the most excellent and advantageous knowledge: It must be so, because it is from God; there is no knowing the Son, but by the revelation of him to us by God. But it has been esteemed excellent by the saints, and they are certainly excellent judges, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He esteemed it an excellent knowledge, better than any other whatsoever: And well he might; because this leads to life eternal, * *And this is life eternal, to know Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Who should be ignorant of him, seeing by him such glory may be possessed.

BECAUSE he is the only Saviour of sinners. Jesus Christ, by virtue of his mediatorial offices, and God's appointment, is not only a Saviour, but a suitable one to needy, helpless sinners. Nothing is more plain, than that Christ is our alone Saviour, "Neither is there salvation in any other." All others are physicians of no value:—Neither our own, nor any other man's righteousness will save us. The apostle, in a so-

* John xvii. 3.

lemn assertion, confirms the verity of Christ's mission, " This is a faithful saying, and worthy " of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus" is the Saviour of sinners ; and it is worth our study, because he is the alone Saviour.

BECAUSE none can love nor believe in Christ unless they know him. Love to Christ is absolutely necessary ; as you see evident from Christ's questioning of Peter so often. We cannot fix our affections upon any thing or person without a knowledge or character of them ; for *ignoti nulla cupido*, if then we be ignorant of, and unacquainted with Christ, we do not love him ; and if men do not love him, they are accursed from him, * *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,*

BECAUSE God has manifested himself in Christ Jesus ; therefore we should determine to know him. If God has made himself known in any way, or by any means, it is certainly our part to know that way by which God makes himself known, as in creation and providence : But when God makes more clear discoveries of himself and attributes, in his Son, it is our duty and interest to be so acquainted with him, " To give

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22,

“ the light of the knowledge of the glory of
 “ God in the face of Jesus Christ.” God has
 manifested his love in Jesus Christ to sinners,
 “ God so loved the world, that he gave his on-
 “ ly begotten Son,” &c. The wisdom and
 power of God is manifested in him, “ Christ the
 “ power and wisdom of God.” The glory of
 his governing justice is displayed in Christ. Jus-
 tice was wronged, the law broken; justice pur-
 sues the criminal; Christ Jesus steps in as our
 cautioner, he satisfies justice, “ Whom God hath
 “ set forth as a propitiation,” &c. God’s ho-
 linefs shines forth in Jesus Christ, “ It pleased
 “ the Lord to bruise him,” &c.

BECAUSE unspeakable misery will be the por-
 tion of such as are found out of Christ, and know
 not God. There is no honouring the Father
 without the Son: And wo to such as are not sa-
 vingly acquainted with God; for he will come
 “ In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them
 “ that know not God, &c.

BECAUSE Jesus Christ is the sum and substance
 of the gospel; he is the pearl hid in the field of
 the gospel: The covenant of grace is but a mani-
 festation of God’s design to save sinners by his
 Son Jesus Christ; so the sacraments are repre-

mentations of his love to us; and the promises are all in him, yea and amen: All that the gospel offers is in and through Jesus Christ, “ But
“ of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is
“ made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sancti-
“ fication, and redemption.”

WE should determine to know Christ as crucified; because this knowledge endears Christ most to the soul: To consider him on the cross in his dying agonies, cannot but melt the most adamant heart: It makes the children of Zion to resolve with the apostle, that nothing shall separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. ** For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge: That if one died for all, then were all dead:—And that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Amen.*

* 2 Cor. v. 14. 15.

S E R M O N X I I .

❖=====❖
J O S H U A x x i v . 2 4 .

*And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God
will we serve, and his voice will we obey.*

❖=====❖

J O S H U A, the penman of this book, was
God's deputy over Israel, and Israel's guide.
Under God, it was by him that great things were
done for the Israelites, in conquering their strong
and numerous enemies, and were brought into
the land of Canaan. It was by him that God
was entreated to make the sun and moon stand

still upon Gibeon, in the valley of Ajalon. It is he that, in this *24th chapter*, gives the Jews an account from Terah, Abraham's father, of the great obligations they lay under to serve the Lord; and from these favours, would stir up the people to be the Lord's servants. It was he, that from these considerations resolved, that let others do as they would, " Yet he and his house " would serve the Lord." In a few words, it must be acknowledged that Joshua was a very great warrior, and a good man; prudent and vigilant among the Jews, and faithful in serving his God. He was, in the preceeding verses, making up the bargain betwixt God and the Jews: He had shewn them the terms upon which God would be their God; they cordially embrace them, and own themselves witnesses of the contract or covenant, and cry out in the words of the text, " The Lord we will serve, and his voice " we will obey;" which more generally may be called the people's resolution: They were now determined upon this as their choice, to do here as they promise; for unless they had made choice of this, there could have been no covenant made with them: Whosoever is of a willing mind must offer, and none else.

THEY profess to serve God, " The Lord our

“ God will we serve.” It is now to be observed, that they lay claim to God as their God in covenant; for the contract was made betwixt God and them by Joshua, and this they say in pursuance to this contract: For wherever there is a covenant made, there are duties to be performed; hereby they disown idols, and cleave to God alone, as their all-sufficient portion, and their best safety.

How happy was Israel, now they could say that the Lord was their God, and had they been as good as their word!

By the voice of God is either meant his commands, that were either vocally and verbally delivered to Moses; and as so, the sense of the words is, we will, in testimony of the truth of our service, obey these commands of thine, or thy whole word in all its directions.

SOMETIMES the voice of God is taken for his providential actings, and so the resolution is not only a declaring that they will obey God's commands, but they will submit to his providences, as all must, who are in covenant with God. The substance of the words seems to be, that the Jews had now forsaken idolatry, and were re-

solved no longer to follow idols, but to serve the living God in the most sincere manner. The wisdom of a religious choice points it to be our highest duty, to make a right and proper use of the moral and divine laws, handed down to us by the great Legislator and Governor of the world.

AT this time it appeared to be the sincere resolution of the Jews, to turn from the evil, and to chuse the good ; to seek the God of their Fathers. This is the resolution of all honest professors. You must know that we have owned God in a covenant way, it is our part and interest therefore to join with the people of God, and say, “ The Lord we will serve,” &c. Thus we find his people doing, * *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* How great a privilege is it, that God admits us to serve him, although he needs none of our services. Our ignorant adorations, and imperfect praises, can add nothing to the fulness of his happiness; nor by our wicked and stubborn disobedience can we detract from his felicity.

IN discoursing from these words, I shall,

* Josh. xxiv. 15.

I. SHEW what fort of service this is that we must perform to God.

II. WHAT fort of an obedience it must be.

III. How we must serve and obey him.

IV. REASONS why we should be thus employed. And

V. APPLY.

FIRST, The properties of this service.

It is prescribed by God. God will be served in his own way : It is not what this or the other man judges decent, or not, in the service of God, that we are to regard for a divine institution, or to think that it will make the service acceptable ; it is the prescript of God that we are to walk by in his service, both as to matter and manner, “ He hath shewed thee, O man, what
“ is good. Thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil ; yea, the fruit of the body,
“ for the sin of the soul would not be acceptable.”

BECAUSE all this is but to follow men's un-

warrantable directions, to the abandoning of God's. There the Lord, by the prophet, says their service could not be acceptable, "It is taught by the precept of men. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

OUR Supreme Parent has prescribed laws deserving our highest regard, for the rule and conduct of his people;—the duty of prayer, with directions both to matter and manner, "It is before him every knee shall bow." Praise is instituted by God, and arguments given to press it, "Who so offereth praise glorifieth me." We are commanded "to search the scriptures," &c.

ALL relative duties, which are the services of God, are also prescribed us; such as husbands to their wives, and wives to their husbands; also we have directions for children to their parents, and for parents to their children; so that while we serve one another, we serve God. These are divine institutions, and not human inventions. The wisdom and excellence of them surpass all others: For where their principles prevail, men are sober, honest, virtuous, benevolent, temperate and industrious,—escapes many evils that afflict others.

IT is a *spiritual service*: Because it is enjoined us by God, who is a Spirit, “Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.” This divine service is most elegantly described in the preceeding verses. It must be done in a spiritual way, with spirits and hearts, in sincerity and in truth. It is not bodily exercise, and lip labour, that God requires; he demands our hearts, “My son, give me thy heart.” Bodily postures and gestures are very little regarded by the searcher of hearts, though men impose them upon us. We are much left to our liberty in this sacred employment, though with all decency we are to worship God; and this may be done without running into superstition.

IT is a *spiritual service*: “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” This is a service most agreeable to God’s will, and most suited to his divine nature. Thus we find God’s people serving him, “Whom I serve with my spirit.” And it is only such as thus serve God that have the promises made to them. It is but gross hypocrisy, to lift up the hands and eyes to God, and not the heart.

IT is a *pleasant service*. The generality of the

world are too apt to fortify themselves in their prejudices against it, by thinking God's service to be a drudgery, a burden, and slavery; therefore we find the wicked crying out, "Let us break their bands asunder," &c. But what can afford more rational grounds of the sublimest joy to the sincere believer, than that they have a God to serve, who is ever ready and willing to assist to the uttermost all who apply to him through faith. But if we take the opinion of the Spirit of God, which should determine us, we will find it saying, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths peace." It is evident, that God's people have esteemed them most sweet and pleasant; therefore the psalmist David cries out, "A day in thy courts, O Lord, is better than a thousand. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after." And though men may object to the afflictions, troubles, and pains of the godly, yet we do not find, but, even in such circumstances, they have rejoiced; and they have found that inward joy and tranquillity which passes all understanding.

IT is an *easy service*. It must be allowed, that our natural powers are not sufficient to perform any piece of religious service, in such a way as God has appointed; yet they who have engaged

heartily in God's service, he furnishes with such help, as makes the work easy and pleasant. Religion requires us to act always from a principle of obedience to that Almighty Being to whom all obedience is due; and this principle will teach us a proper regard to all its precepts, and verifies the words of our Saviour, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The unwillingness of men to serve God makes his service a burden to them; but Christ's servants are all volunteers, he makes them "a willing and obedient people in a day of his power;" all others are but slaves, serving divers lusts and pleasures. Christ's service is easy, when compared with the service of the ceremonial law, and the slavery of sin.

It is a service, the most *profitable and advantageous*. People commonly serve where they can have the best advantage; but no advantage like this; which ariseth from our serving of God; for "Godliness is great gain; it hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come;" and at last we will be for ever with the Lord. Consider that joy, that pleasure which is at God's right-hand, to the Christian who performs his duty: There is a recompense, a reward, and a prize to run for, which far excells the riches of the east.

IT is an *honourable service*. They have a great deal of credit and honour that serve God; because they serve an honourable Master, the Lord of heaven and earth, who is described to be above all.

THEY have an honourable work, it is no flattery, and no underhand business that will abide the test, and stand the trials of men.

THEY have honourable and worthy attendants and companions,—the people of God. They will be honourably rewarded, sometimes here, and certainly hereafter, “Them that honour me, I will honour:” If any man serve me, him will my Father honour:—An honourable inheritance, honourable privileges, honourable relations: God is their father, Christ is their elder brother, and heaven their home.

IT is a *free and voluntary service*. All God's servants are volunteers: He loves not to force his servants, he does not think such can be faithful to him; therefore the Jews were to serve God with a willing mind.

IT is a *holy service*. It is the service of a holy God, and must be done in a holy way and man-

ner, * *I will be sanctified in all them that draw nigh unto me.* We must have our minds only and chiefly fixed upon God in his service.

SECOND, What sort of an obedience it must be that God's servants must yield to his voice.

It must be *personal*. God requires that all his servants should obey his word and law: Thus Moses tells the Jews, they ought to "obey his voice." The Jews, as a covenanted people, were to do this, and considered with respect to every particular person, it was required of them, "thou must obey thy God." The obedience of man cannot make us righteous, nay, nor our own, if it were not for the application of the active obedience of Christ to believers: All that man can do, would be found to be as filthy rags. Works of supererogation appear to be void and vain; for if man, by his own obedience, cannot make himself righteous, much less can he make another so; and though our personal obedience will not justify us, yet it is necessary, if it were but to testify a regard to God as our legislator, and to his laws as just and righteous.

It must be *perpetual*. All the days of our life

* Lev. x. 3.

we must obey God's voice ; you must never allow yourselves to think that there may be a time for you to disobey God : Take the advice of the wise man in this, " Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." As every new day begins, begin with a resolution still to serve and obey God ; and continue the resolves all the days of thy life, " That they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth. " That we may serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life." The commands do not only oblige us to duty, but they are of an abiding force.

It must be *universal*. We must obey all the commands of God ; nor will this obedience argue a state of perfection in this life, seeing all that is meant by obedience here is a sincere respect to all the divine commands. A man may have this, and yet be guilty of innumerable failings and sins, such as David's, " Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commands." Also, we are far from being able to yield a perfect obedience to the law of God : And men's being called perfect in spirit, does not argue that they were without sin, or that they could not sin. Regenerate souls may be guilty of many sins : A perfect Noah drank

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wine and was drunk: A perfect Job cursed his day: A Hezekiah's heart was lifted up: The apostle Paul had not yet attained, but was pressing after it, though he had a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. Alas! in many things we all offend: For "who can understand his errors. Blessed be God we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous."

THIRD, How we must serve and obey God.

WE must do it *cheerfully* and *freely*. The Lord loves a cheerful giver; for such as do not offer freely cannot be accepted of by God. A constrained service and forced obedience can never be a conscientious one; and consequently cannot be such as is pleasing to God. No man ought to allow himself to be forced to the performance of any religious duty that his conscience does not approve of; nor ought any to refrain from duty where they plainly see it to be so. God will accept none but a free-will offering; none but such as were of a willing mind were to offer unto the Lord, "Every man that gives it willingly." O when shall we be able to say, "To do thy will is my delight." As our divine Saviour, and king David did, "I delight to do

“thy will.” Never, my friends, count duty a burden; consider, the difficultest part is easily gone through by Christ strengthening us. He who is perfect wisdom and goodness, will in every case take such care of us, as divine goodness and wisdom require.

Sincerely, and with all the heart. In opposition to hypocrisy and perfidy, however far men may deal hypocritically with each other, yet there is no hypocrisy so horrid as where it relates to God, and the duties we perform to him; for a man to deal so with the Supreme Being, is in effect to deny him, or to wish him to be some other than he is. It is the heart that God requires, “For behold,” says the psalmist, “thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” That men be honest to God; that they serve him according to truth, or the truths laid down in his word. This must be one application that must attend our serving God, if we consider that it is the direction of Joshua to the people that they do so, “Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth. Caleb served the Lord wholly, and was rewarded.

Reverentially, and with godly fear. We have all the reason in the world to approach God thus,

and thus to serve and obey him. If we would but consider his infinite perfections, we have every reason to cry out with Isaiah, "Wo is me, " for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in " the midst of a people of unclean lips." The sight he had of God in his glory occasioned this. And yet this reverential way of serving God does not destroy a holy boldness; we are to fear like children, and we are to love as children, " Serve " the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trem- " bling." The psalmist, when exhorting to reverence in the service of God, says, " O come, " let us worship and bow down, let us kneel " before the Lord our Maker."

Humbly, and with all lowliness of mind. To prostrate our bodies, without humbling our souls, will not be an acceptable service. God will be served this way, it is his own direction, " To " walk humbly with thy God." How unbecoming is it to see a proud professor: How odd and unbecoming was the Pharisees frame, " I " thank thee I am not as other men," &c. And how suitable was that of the poor Publicans, " Who smote upon his breast, saying, God be " merciful to me a sinner." Before honour is humility.

Only. Let this be thy only, thy daily business, to serve God, and to obey his voice. Though men may justly mind their daily callings, their lawful business; yet no worldly business should juggle out the performance of these spiritual duties; all others should be accounted as foreign business's to these. David makes it his only business to wait on God, and to serve him, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." He will not give his honour to another, nor his glory to graven images: We must serve the Lord only, if we would walk as those that are in covenant with God; and must abandon all other lovers, for the danger of returning to strange gods is very great, "If you serve strange gods, he will consume you."

WE must serve God with our *house and family*. A religious good man would wish all his family and connections sincere in their obedience, as well as himself. Very great pains some have taken to instruct and educate their family: Joshua says, "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." The Jews was directed to instruct their families and children, "Ye shall teach those words to your children, and thou shall write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." And how very

careless are some people of their families and children; seldom or never directing them to address the Author of their being in prayer, for his aid and assistance, by either their own example or precept: But how many are very careful about the training a favourite horse or dog. If swearing, and drunken parents, so also are the children and servants. Endeavour all in your power to walk as becometh the gospel of Christ, and to bring others to God with yourselves: Consider, they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars for ever and ever.

Constantly, or all the days of our life. As to serve and obey God should be our only and chief business, so should it be our constant employment: Be resolving that you will constantly go on in the ways and service of God, “ Serve the Lord in
“ holiness, and righteousness, all the days of our
“ life.”

FOURTH, Reasons why we should thus serve and obey God.

BECAUSE he is the *parent of the universe*, the righteous Governor, and unerring Judge of the world, and our Lord Creator: As he is our Creator and sovereign Lord. Religion teacheth us,

that he is our guardian and parent; that he is the greatest and the best, as well as the most awful of beings: that his power and majesty are immense, and also is his mercy: So we owe him all obedience as creatures and subjects. The psalmist makes this an argument, when he says, "Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. The Lord is great in Zion, he is above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." As God is such, so he is the supreme God, which strengthens the argument to our serving him, "There is none like unto thee, O Lord, for thou art great; thy name is great in might."

BECAUSE of the *covenant relation* that there is betwixt God and his people. Wicked men may think that they are not obliged to serve God from this, but good men may; considering, that as there is a covenant-relation betwixt God and his people, so the obligation to serve and obey him is greater, "For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture. Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God."

BECAUSE he is our *Lord Redeemer*. God has redeemed us for this end, that being free from the slavery of sin and Satan, we might be en-

couraged and enabled to yield an obedience unto him, * *For ye are bought with a price : Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirits, which are God's.*

BECAUSE he is our *preserver and upholder*. Is he not the God of our life, and length of our days? This is a common argument; one that reaches the bad, as well as the good man. He makes the rain to fall, and the sun to shine on the one, as well as on the other.

BECAUSE he is our *deliverer*. Many signal deliverances we and our fore-fathers have met with from the hand of God, “ Your eyes have
“ seen all the great acts which he did. This is
“ the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.”

BECAUSE God has *commanded* us, and made it expressly our duty to serve and obey him.
“ Things that are revealed belong unto us, and
“ to our children for ever,” that we may observe that which is contained in the divine law. The wise king of Israel tells us, to “ Fear God,
“ and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man.”

* 1 Cor. vi. 20,

BECAUSE to do so is the way to keep a good conscience, void of all offence toward God and our fellow creatures, and procures an inward felicity, and happy state, that makes men not ashamed. Certainly David thought so, when he said, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Great peace have they who love thy law."

BECAUSE to do so testifies a respect unto God, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This is so much the more evident, when there is a preference given to the commands of God before the commands of men, "Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

BECAUSE to do this is to live like religious and reasonable men. Good men know they ought to do this, but even wicked men should not deny this service, because it is *reasonable*. This service is also *pleasant* and *profitable* *.

FIFTH, Application.

It lets us see that God's people should be his obedient servants: For which way soever they

* 1 Theff. iv, 17.

turn themselves in their pilgrimage, either to the right-hand or to the left, asleep or awake, in prosperity or adversity; his divine essence surrounds them, supports and protects them from every evil and false way.

It informs us, that obedience to God's commands is the best testimony of our being faithful servants, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." If we believe that there is a supreme director of all the events of this sublunary world, that he is the great, the sublime cause, that governs the universe: The very belief of this supreme Being is essentially necessary to our happiness. And to have an advocate with the Father, even his Son Jesus Christ, who interests himself in our obedience, may make us cry with grateful hearts, "What manner of love is this," &c.

WE may infer, that disobedient sinners are none of God's people: But we have no right to judge; but may the God of love turn every one from the evil of their ways!

It in a particular manner reproves such as have entered into covenant with God, and yet, instead of serving him, are the devil's slaves, they will not respect the supreme governor of the

world, either as father or master, “ If I be a
“ father, where is mine honour? And if I be
“ a master, where is my fear?”

How lamentable is the case of disobedient and impenitent sinners, “ Fools make a mock at sin.” No age has set religion in a clearer view than the present; and none treated it with greater contempt and ridicule: Because religion opposes their favourite passions, vices and corruptions; they also oppose its doctrines and principles, saying, “ there is no God.”

TRY whether you are God’s, or the devil’s servants. How widely different will their condition be, if there is a God who will judge the world in righteousness, and a day when men shall rise again, and give account of their works; (and that there is, all nature cries aloud through all her works) may not the devil’s slaves tremble and fear, where then will the sinner and ungodly, the profane scoffer appear?

BE exhorted to cleave to the great Author of our religion, and serve him all the days of your lives. There is no danger on the side of religion and virtue; but on that of vice and folly it is very great. Never, never sport with the honour

of our divine Lawgiver, nor your own falvation. Never provoke the great Author of nature to wrath! but fay to every temptation, how can I do this great wickednefs, and fin againft God. Then, my friends, we may with certain hope think of being hereafter numbered with the children of our heavenly Father, where peace and everlafting harmony for ever reign.

S E R M O N XIII.

MATTHEW ii. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

I SHALL introduce to the words I have read, by a little considering the verses that precede, —from the 25th verse. 'There our Saviour thanks his Father for revealing the gospel unto the simple, and hiding it from the wise and prudent, *i. e.* from the Scribes and Pharisees, the doctors of the age, who were wise in their own and in

their neighbours's opinion. He tells us in the 27th verse, that all power was given unto him, and that none could know the Father but in and by him. Here he closeth his discourse, with a general invitation to all to come unto him. Nature, when it is over-burdened, commonly seeks for ease, and if rest is afforded unto it, how thankful is it for such a Saviour. Our souls are many times burdened; oppression calls for relief; tyranny is not easily born: There is no tyranny worse than spiritual tyranny. Happy for us if we could see sin acting in us, and as a burden oppressing us. If we are so sensible of its mischief, and will but come to the Saviour, we may have rest; he offers to take our burden off us, if we will but come unto him, "Come unto me
 " all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and
 " I will give you rest." In these words we have three things to be particularly taken notice of.

AN invitation, "Come unto me;" in which we have the person inviting, *i. e.* Jesus Christ: He invites that can best help us; he invites that has the keys of David; that can loose or open, and no man can shut; that shuts, and no man can open: He it is that has all power delivered unto him of the Father, therefore a most suitable person to invite: Our Saviour invites us, entreats

and desires us to come unto him ; Jesus the appointed, sealed, and anointed invites ; he who is the door and the way to everlasting life.

THE invitation itself, “ Come.” The coming here spoken of is to be understood, believing ; —this is plain ; for “ He that cometh unto God “ must believe that he is.” There is none can come aright unto God, without believing on him.

THE person invited. “ All ye that labour, and “ are heavy laden.” Delightful invitation ! all who are weary, and wants to be discharged from their burden. Some understand it of those that are loaden with a sence of the law, which is sometimes called a yoke ; others of trials and afflictions ; others, and more generally, is agreed to be understood of the burden of sin. I see no reason why all these may not be included and intended in it, for Christ gives rest from all of them, whether from the force of the law, from sin, or from afflictions.

WE have great encouragement annexed,— “ And I will give you rest.” The rest here spoken of may be understood both as spiritual and eternal rest. Whatever it is, it must be of Christ’s giving, and our seeking. Well for us that we

can have such upon our seeking, and that Christ is ready to give it!

THAT the heavy laden sinner, upon coming unto Christ, shall find rest.

THE doctrine is almost the words of the text: Christ has promised it, therefore we may believe it. The like expression you have in the verse immediately following that which I have read, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; "and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in "him should not perish, but have everlasting "life." They that come unto Christ believingly, they shall inherit eternal life, and shall be possessed of a rest that cannot be taken from them.

IN dilating upon this doctrine, I shall prosecute the following method.

I. SHEW you what is imported by coming unto Jesus Christ.

II. How we should come unto him.

III. WHAT we should come unto Christ for.

IV. WHY we should come unto him.

V. APPLY.

FIRST, What is imported by coming unto Jesus Christ. It supposes, that by nature we are at a distance from God: If it were not so, the invitation would be to no purpose. Revealed religion, and our own experience, witnesseth to us the truth of this. Do not we find a law in our members warring against the law of our minds? Do not we find an inclination to that which is evil, and an aversion to that which is good? That when we would do good, evil is present with us. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirits of God. By nature we have no spiritual discerning, and, consequently, must be at a distance from God. The apostle describes a person in a natural state as very miserable, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world." If without God, we surely are at a great distance from him; and it is owing to his mercy that ever we are brought near: But although that they were once in such a condition, yet they were brought nigh, by the pre-

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cious blood of Jesus Christ, their peace and peacemaker.

IT supposes that we stand in need of help; this necessarily and consequentially follows upon the former: For if by nature we are at a distance from God, we then must surely stand in need of help from him: If it were not so, why does Christ offer his help? They that have strength of their own need not a borrowed help from others: The whole need not the physician, but they who are sick. The sick cannot cure themselves, but the great physician of souls can, and will cure all who come unto him, "Draw me, and I will run after thee. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Do not we stand in very great need of help then, when we neither can run nor come, without we be drawn by a divine power.

IT supposes a sufficiency in God to help us in coming to him. This appears from "No man can come, except the Father drew him." It is as much as to say, if the Father draw us, we shall come; and then it supposeth strength and sufficiency in the drawer. In the prophets it is written, "They shall be all taught of God." How

can they be taught, if there is not infinite wisdom and understanding in him: And they that are taught of the Father, they come unto him.

It supposes unwearied diligence in them that do come; therefore it is compared to labouring, striving, and learning, * *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.* Beginners in learning meet with the greatest difficulties, but yet they must undergo the pains, if ever they expect to succeed. The husbandman must labour and give unwearied diligence, otherwise he cannot expect the fruit of them: And as there is, and must be, labouring for daily bread; so must there also be for spiritual food, “Labour not for the meat that
“perisheth, but for that meat which endureth un-
“to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall
“give unto you.” This plainly shews us that we cannot expect spiritual food by idleness, no more than we can our daily food. It is not he who pretends to come for a while, and then gives over, that will obtain the prize; no, but we must hold on to the end, if we expect the crown: An unwearied diligence must be given.

It supposes that Christ is able to reward after that we have come unto him; if it were not so,

* Matth. ii. 29.

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It supposes that Christ is able to reward after that we have come unto him; if it were not so,

* Matth. ii. 29.

to what purpose are we invited to come? but
 “ He is able to save, and to destroy.” He renders to every man according to his works: The godly and righteous man he will save; the sinner and impenitent he will destroy, “ My sheep
 “ follow me; and I give unto them eternal life;
 “ and they shall never perish, neither shall any
 “ pluck them out of my hand.” Here is a sufficient proof of Christ’s ability to reward his people; and it is strengthened by what is added,
 “ That his Father gave them to him, who is
 “ greater than all; and he and his Father are
 “ one.”

SECOND, How we should come unto him. We should come unto him by *prayer*: This is one way of coming unto God, which the light of nature hath taught us. Nature lets us know that there is a God; that this God is greater than man, therefore we must conclude that he must be worshipped; but revealed religion makes our duty more plain, and lets us see that it is our indispensable duty to come unto God this way: Our divine Saviour tells us, this is our duty upon all occasions, “ And he spake a parable
 “ unto them, to the end, that men ought al-
 “ ways to pray, and not to faint.” This scripture is not to be interpreted as if there were a

constant obligation upon us to be upon our knees; this would be inconsistent with our performance of other duties that are required of us; but it lets us see that there is no time in which we may not come unto God by prayer; or that we may frequently and ordinarily do this, as the queen of Sheba says of Solomon's servants, "They stand always;" that is, ordinarily and frequently before him. The apostle Paul exhorts to this duty, "Pray without ceasing;" that when God in his providence gives an opportunity, we should always be in a praying frame, for we daily stand in need of help and assistance.

WE should come unto him *humbly*. Humility well becomes us upon all occasions, but in a special manner when we are to approach the presence of a holy God, by a more solemn coming unto him; this is a frame that God requires of us, and that which he promiseth to reward, "If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, then will I hear from heaven."

HUMILITY is a grace that recommends one man to another; it renders conversation acceptable and delightful, and gains the love and esteem of all good men. If we were to approach

the presence of an earthly prince, with how much humility should we come before him: We should come before him, and bow one knee upon the ground. But with how much more reverence, and profound regard, ought we to come before him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

WE should come unto God *sincerely*. Sincerity indeed should run through all our duties, but in a special manner it should be a chief ingredient in our coming unto God. We should not go unto him with our bodies, and present a bodily sacrifice, while "our hearts are far from him." This is not an acceptable frame, nor an agreeable sacrifice. God denounces judgment against such by the prophet Isaiah, for their hypocritical acting against God, * *For as much as this people draw near me with their lips, and with their mouths do honour me, but have their hearts far from me, therefore the wisdom of their wise men shall perish.* For this Christ reproves the Scribes and Pharisees, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths," &c. This is a very great sin, and one of the highest degrees of hypocrisy. Sincerity is that which Joshua adviseth the tribes unto, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity."

* Isa. xxix. 14.

WE should come unto him *speedily*, and without *delay*. Delays in matters of such importance are very dangerous; it may be we shall never have such offers of coming unto him again. Death may seize upon us unawares, then where are we? and what can we do or say? We should go as the Lord by Zechariah the prophet foretold of the Jews, “And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord.” Great was the zeal and forwardness of primitive converts to bring others to the church, to acquaint them with the gospel of Christ. We should endeavour to imitate them in a speedy coming unto the Lord, not only without delay, but to go very speedily.

WE should go unto the Lord *cheerfully*. When people come unto the Lord forced by some outward mean, cheerfulness seldom goes along in those duties; but people should go unto the Lord, as he puts it into their minds, and as they purpose in their hearts, without any grudging or unwillingness, but with the greatest freedom and cheerfulness. It is the sincere affection that the great Author of nature looks into, in your coming to him.

WE should come unto the Lord *boldly*. We.

should maintain a reverential fear of God upon our minds, but it ought not to degenerate into slavishness, but with a holy boldness: We should come unto him as children to a parent. The apostle exhorts us to come this way. Let us “Therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.” Christ takes us by the hand, and leads us thither, and pleads for us by his precious blood; then let us, with cheerful boldness, draw near unto him, who has such a concern and regard for us.

WE should come *resolutely*, with a firm purpose of heart never to go back. Resolution in the performance of any thing makes it more easy; we should with as great a resolution go to God, as king David did, to perform his vows. “I have sworn, and I will perform it.” There is no obstacle which should debar us from such a commendable work. There is no doubt but we shall meet with many things to hinder us, if we give ear to temptations; but with a firm resolution we should despise and break through them, and go to God our Saviour, who with the greatest earnestness invites us to come unto him, that so we may have life. May our hearts

echo, and say again, " Lord, unto thee will we
" come, and thy face will we seek."

THIRD, What we should come to Christ for. We should come to him to be taught and instructed in the will of God. Christ performs this part for believers as their prophet: It belongs to a prophet to expound the law, declare the will of God, and foretell things to come. All these meet in a singular and eminent manner in Christ our prophet. If we then would be taught our duty, and know God's will concerning us, we must come unto Jesus Christ; we must hear him in all things, for he is a prophet that the Lord hath raised up for this very purpose, " A
" prophet shall the Lord your God raise up un-
" to you, of your brethren, like unto me; him
" shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall
" say unto you." The way and manner of our being taught, and having our minds enlightened, fixed and settled in Jesus Christ, God hath spoken to us in these last times by his Son, " He is
" the true light which enlighteneth every man
" that cometh into the world." We must come then to be taught, for there is none that teacheth like him; he teaches powerfully, prudently, and effectually. He has the keys of David; he opens, and no man shuts. He can en-

lighten dark minds; he has the only sovereign eye-salve that can cure your blindness; he is the only oculist that can clear your understandings, the eyes of your mind, that enlightens the medium, and heals the organs of all your senses.

WE must come unto him for *reconciliation* with the Father. By nature we are at a distance from God, "Strangers to the covenant of promise, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world." This is a deplorable state indeed, yet such is the condition we are in by nature. But our great matter of comfort is, that the greatest of enemies may be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. They that are afar off may be brought near by the blood of Jesus, if they will but come unto him as their faithful high-priest. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful and merciful high-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

WE must come unto him to be *governed by him*. Jesus Christ is a king to his people, as well as a prophet or priest; he executes the office of the one as well as the other. This office is very advantageous and helpful to his people; what a

confusion should the church of Christ have been in, if he had not appointed an order and government in it. Jesus Christ himself is the head and king of the church, and we must therefore come unto him to be ruled and governed, by what was revealed by him as a prophet, purchased by him as a priest, and applied by him as a king, in first subduing the souls of his elect to his spiritual government, then ruling them as his subjects, and ordering all things in the kingdom of his providence for their good. God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him “to be the head “over all things to the church.” He is the head of the world, and of the church too ;—of the world, by way of dominion ;—of the church, by way of union and special influence, therefore we should come unto Christ to be governed and influenced by him.

WE should come unto him for the *forgiveness of our sins* : God has exalted him with his right-hand for this end, “To be a prince and “a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and “forgiveness of sins.” We must come unto him to be saved from the condemnation due to sin, and from the pollution that is acquired by it.

THERE is none else that can give repentance

and remission, or forgiveness of sin, but he ; therefore, if we would be freed from the fatal danger and consequences of them, we must come unto Jesus Christ our most merciful Saviour.

WE must come unto him for *support and succour against temptations to sin*. There is none more able to advise and assist, in any case or condition, than they who have been alike circumstanced with them. We meet with daily temptations, the devil uses all means to delude us, our Saviour is acquainted with our case, he himself was tempted by the devil, and that to the commission of the most abominable sin, even the worship of the devil : But being acquainted with the devil's insinuations, and cunning temptations, he can advise and succour us under those circumstances, “ For in that he himself hath suffered, “ being tempted, he is able to succour them that “ are tempted.” Here is great encouragement to discouraged Christians under the devil's temptations—Christ is able to succour you.

WE must come unto him for *salvation from sin, and to have happiness for ever with him*. If we have hopes of ever being saved, and eternally happy, it must be by him ; there is no obtaining happiness hereafter, without following

the gospel rule and method, the way that God has laid down in order to obtain it; The way that God has made known for coming to heaven is by Jesus Christ, “ Neither is their salvation “ in any other; for there is none other name “ given under heaven among men whereby we “ can be saved.” He was exalted by the Father for ~~this~~ purpose, to be the Saviour of sinners; to be a Saviour for their souls, as well as for their bodies: If we will but come unto him, we may have life; we may live for ever with God in glory. There seems to be very much implied in our Saviour’s own words, when he is complaining of the backwardness of sinners, “ Ye “ will not come unto me that you may have “ life.” It is as much as if he had said, if you “ will come unto me, you shall live for ever.

WE must come unto him for *grace*. This is the way to obtain an interest in his favour, and be entitled to the benefits of the covenant of grace. We cannot bestow grace on, nor work faith in ourselves, for it is “ the gift of God.” If it is absolutely necessary for us to have; and if it is a gift, we must go to the giver, that so we may enjoy it. That it is a gift, is plain from scripture, “ For by grace are ye saved through faith, “ and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

That we are saved is the gift of God, or his faith; and that ye increase in faith is from God, is plain, from what the father of the child said in St Mark's gospel, "Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with fear, Lord, "I believe, help mine unbelief." Here he came, and cried to Christ to increase his faith; so ought we to follow the example of such a person, and come to Christ, and beg of him that he would not only give us faith, but increase it in us, that so we may be strong "in all might in the inner man."

FOURTH, The reasons why we should come to Christ. Because there is no knowing the Father without coming unto him. Unless the Son reveal the Father unto us, we shall be miserably in the dark, both as to his divine essence, his deep and unsearchable counsels. All the other dispensations of the gospel, the saving knowledge of God, is in and through Jesus Christ, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." We cannot expect that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, will reveal his Father unto us without our coming unto him, nor savingly enlighten our dark minds in the things that appertain to our peace and happiness.

WE should come unto, or believe on Jesus Christ, because we have no continuing abode here below. Experience, as well as revealed religion, makes this very clear and plain unto us, that a man's days in the world are like the grass that groweth up, and is cut down and perisheth. The very make, matter, and composition of our bodies plainly evidence our mortality, and declare our frailty. We are dying and fading creatures, we have here no continuing city; why do we not go to the Saviour, so that we may live for ever? At the very best, this world is not a place fit for us, nor can our state in it be desirable. Since it is imperfect, fleeting, and vanishing, and we must leave it, and die out of it, may the God of all mercy perfect and prepare every unprepared heart for his removal from this sublunary state!

BECAUSE coming unto, or believing on him, is the way to obtain eternal life. Life is very desirable, and the best method ought to be followed, and persisted in, in order to enjoy it. There is only one way appointed whereby we may have life, and that is by Jesus Christ, and they undoubtedly will be sharers of it who believe on him, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." He speaks of it here

as a matter of the greatest certainty; he does not say they shall have it, but he has it already: He has grace in his heart, which is glory begun. He that giveth ear to the great propofals of the gospel, and agreeth to them; as to receive Jesus Christ in his heart, and trusteth and hopeth in him, hath everlasting life; that is, he hath a certain and a just title to it; nay, in the first fruits, being actually delivered from condemnation, to which, without faith, he is exposed. He already liveth a spiritual life, and having Christ in him, hath the hope of glory, into the full possession of which he shall most certainly come.

BECAUSE if we do not come unto him; and believe on him, we must inevitably perish: That person is not like to escape his ruin; that, instead of shunning and avoiding it, runs and rushes precipitately and headlong into it, and will not take the right way to be saved from the danger he is exposed to. This we have daily experience of among ourselves, of seeing too many running headlong to ruin, despising the Saviour, and refusing to believe on him, “who is the way, the truth, and the life. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” He that doth not receive the gospel published by the Son of God, and

doth not embrace him, shall not be saved: It must be so, because there is no other way appointed whereby he can be saved. He who will not take the right way, he who will not believe in him, in order to see life, he must die; nay, he must die eternally. What a miserable state are they in, who are exposed to the wrath of the great God of nature, which the unbeliever neither can avoid, nor abide. It is a terrible threatening, but agreeable to several texts of scripture, "It shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Every one that will not believe and obey him, will as certainly be destroyed, as they who disobeyed Moses, and came to an untimely end.

WE should come unto him, because Christ invites and entreats us, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden." How can we refuse if Christ invites? This would be a contemning and despising of his offers, undervaluing his love, flighting eternal life, and counting the blood of Jesus as a thing of no worth. He invites every one that thirsteth to come and take of this water of life, "Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." The prophet having discoursed of Christ, and the church, he here

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makes an invitation to all persons to come to Christ, and to his church; and this is but agreeable to what he ordered his own servants to do, “ Again he sent forth other servants, saying, “ tell them that are bidden, behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings “ are killed, and all things are ready, come un- “ to the marriage.” Christ here offers to be married unto sinners, to espouse them to himself; and they who do come unto him, and accept him, as exhibited in the covenant of grace, are by faith united to him.

WE should come unto Christ, because there is none who can take us out of his hands, if we once embrace and accept him. He is a faithful, careful, and affectionate shepherd, who is always ready to sustain and defend his own against all the attempts of cruel adversaries, “ I “ give unto them eternal life, and they shall “ never perish, neither shall any pluck them out “ of my hand;” nor is there any able to pluck them out of his Father’s hands. They that are Christ’s followers shall be preserved through faith, by the power of God, unto eternal life; no attempts of enemies can be able to pluck them out of Christ’s hands, for they that would venture to do this, must contend with omnipotency. Im-

postors seek to thrust us from God, and would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect; but this is their happiness, that they are kept by God as in a strong guard or garrison, and none is able to pluck them out of his hand.

FIFTH, Apply.

Is it so, that it is the duty of all labouring and heavy laden sinners to come to Christ? Then here is just ground of reproof to them who will not come unto him; in doing so they despise the only remedy,—they make light of Christ's intercession and government,—they despise all the offices of our Saviour, and every part of them:—They reject the invitations that are made of coming unto him,—they undervalue the greatest love,—they approve of their wicked ways, and of that state they are in, and are therefore very justly reproveable; they, after the manner of Pharaoh, say, “Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice. I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.”

Is it the duty of labouring sinners to come to Christ? then it reproves them that do not count sin a burden. We never can come to Christ aright, until we reckon sin a heavy weight, as the

apostle did, when he exhorted to lay “ aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us.” How reproveable are they that indulge sin to the excluding of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour upbraids them himself, that, notwithstanding the mighty works that were done among them, they did not count sin a burden.

HERE is ground to lament over them that will not come unto Christ. A true Christian will not only be concerned for his own safety, but he will mourn over the sad state of those who stand out, and will not come unto him. Our Saviour himself laments over sinners in very pathetic and moving expressions, “ Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.” Here is both a lamentation and an invitation: He invites, but yet laments to see the hardness of people’s hearts, that they will not come unto him.

LET all be exhorted to come unto Jesus Christ. Let us not tarry, nor linger, but without delay let us go to him who is the life, and the true light of the world, that gladdens the whole creation; he is the Sun of the intellectual system, to the preservation of mankind. This may shew us our righteousness is as filthy rags, therefore it behoves us to fly to Jesus Christ, who is sufficient and satisfactory.

S E R M O N XIV.

MATTHEW ii. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

THE former part of this verse being fully explained, I proceed to consider the latter part of it; namely, the *rest* here promised by Christ to all who believe in his name. And without any other introduction, shall shew,

I. WHAT kind of rest it is that Christ gives his people.

II. How he gives this rest.

III. WHY he gives it, or to what end.

IV. APPLY.

FIRST, To what kind of rest it is. It is an inward rest, or peace of conscience that Christ gives. Our Saviour seldom gives his people that outward rest which the wicked of the world enjoy, nor that worldly prosperity which follow them: For God sometimes sees fit, in his wise providence, that his people's lot should be, to be under heavy afflictions, worldly crosses and losses, and reproached by wicked men; and have those things laid to their charge that they are not guilty of, and even to be calumniated by their brethren. Still, under all these afflictions, God gives them an inward rest, so that they can say with the psalmist David, "I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." He was sensible of his own innocency, notwithstanding the malice and calumny of his inveterate enemies; they were not able to disturb his inward peace. They that are burdened with a sense of sin must have a respect to God's law, and they that love it have inward peace and tranquillity of mind, that the wicked of the world

can never deprive them of, notwithstanding some outward disturbances they may meet with, "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend you." The apostle tells us, that "the fruit of the Spirit is peace." But it is love, and joy, &c.—an inward rest, and peace of conscience. He gives those labouring and heavy-laden sinners that come unto him a rest from the guilt of sin. Guilt, in a political sense, is nothing else than the state or condition things are in, till they are either absolved or condemned: In a divine sense, it is that obligation to punishment which sin makes us liable unto. This guilt Christ gives returning sinners rest from, in their justification. While sinners are out of Jesus Christ, they become liable to punishment; but upon their returning to him they find rest: For this guilt is done away, by the imputation of his spotless righteousness, before that is imputed. The demands of the law are terrible, and render a guilty soul uneasy; but it is otherwise, with the believer, * *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Where the sinner finds his sins pardoned, this must surely give great rest and ease; for then none can lay any thing to their charge, "For it is God that justifieth."

* Rom. viii. 1.

THE rest which Christ gives labouring sinners, is a rest from the reigning power and dominion of sin. This is one of the greatest benefits a poor creature meets with in this side of time, to find sin, like the house of Saul, growing weaker and weaker; and grace, like the house of David, stronger and stronger. Sin may grow daily, but it will not be totally eradicated while we are in this world. While we have a being, it will have an inbeing; and the best have found "a law in their members, warring against the law of the mind, so that when they would do good, evil is present with them." But it is matter of rejoicing, that although sin may remain, yet it will not reign in a believer. Upon a person's forsaking sin, and coming unto Jesus Christ, a stronger than the strong man takes possession, and sin's dominions are then broken, "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." After we come to Christ, we rest from being under the curse and malediction of the law, from it as a covenant of works; and this rest Christ gives, because sin does not then reign, but grace, through righteousness, by Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

THIS is an eternal rest that Christ gives them, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his

“ only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth
“ in him should not perish, but have everlasting
“ life ;” they that come unto Christ, believing
in him, shall inherit eternal life, and shall then be
possessed of a rest that can never be taken from
them. There remaineth a rest for the people
of God ; they enjoy a continual Sabbath, which
is a state and season of a most glorious rest. This
shall be enjoyed by those who count sin a bur-
den, and who fly unto Jesus for ease. They have
an entrance here into internal peace of con-
science, and their right and title to the eternal
inheritance, and the full enjoyment of this rest
secured unto them. O God, may thy wisdom
direct us to strive to obtain this eternal rest !

A REST from former labours. The life of
the people of God while in this world, is not an
idly spending of time, but they must be labour-
ing, striving, and working, “ They must strive
“ to enter in at the strait gate ; they must be
“ working out their salvation with fear and
“ trembling.” They must work while it is day,
least the night of darkness come upon them. But
now they are freed from that hard work, Christ
gives them eternal rest from such labours, “ Bless-
“ ed are the dead which die in the Lord, from
“ henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they

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“ rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” There is no need of labouring and striving to enter in at the strait gate, because they have already entered into the possession of that eternal blest and rest.

A REST from persecutions. The people of God meet with troubles and hardships in this world, being sometimes persecuted from city to city, for the profession of the faith once delivered to the saints, and are made to seek the bread of their souls, with the peril of their lives ; and are forced to undergo many times the cruelest calumnies, and severest deaths. Stephen was an eminent instance of this, who was cast out of the city, and stoned to death, by the cruel and barbarous multitude. There was a rest provided for him, of which his persecutors could not deprive him, * *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.* Upon this he died, and entered into rest from all his former labours and persecutions, “ He who overcometh shall inherit all things.”

It implies a rest from the very inbeing of sin. They that come unto Christ are freed in this

* Acts vii, 60.

world from the guilt, the reigning power and dominion of sin, but yet sin has its inbeing in them : It is inherent to their natures, and the best are not wholly and fully freed from it. Now is the time, when they enter into this eternal rest, that they are freed from the very inbeing of sin ; Because no impure thing can enter into the new Jerusalem, no unholy thing can come there ; and they that are there are past the danger of sinning any more, for then their mortal bodies have put on immortality, and their corruptible has put on incorruption ; God himself hath destroyed the grave, and wiped away every tear from their eyes ; death is swallowed up in victory : They have a victory over sin, death, and the law, through Jesus Christ. No more sin, nor crying, nor death, because former things are utterly done away.

THIS eternal rest implies in it a rest from afflictions of whatever kind. There are no jars, divisions, nor disorders there ; no envy, strife, and evil speaking, which are commonly the beginning of afflictions and misery ; nothing there but perfect purity, unity, peace, and love in the highest degree. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are past a-

way: Their former fighting is turned into singing, misery into majesty, trouble into triumph and victory.

It implies in it a rest in the company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. The people of God do not always find such a rest here below, their spirits are often vexed with the conversation of wicked men. The time is fast approaching when they shall be freed from such company; they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and have communion and fellowship with him, these are their inseparable and everlasting companions in the kingdom of heaven. They are said to sit down with them, to denote the rest and pleasure the saints shall have in heaven; for then faith will be turned into vision, and hope into fruition.

It implies in it a rest with God. Not but that the people of God rest with him while they are upon earth; that is, they have the peace of their own consciences; and sometimes he is pleased to give them peace, among and with their neighbours, which may be called a resting with the Lord, or enjoying it from him; but this eternal rest is a degree higher, and of a far larger extent, "For they are then ever with the Lord."

After the general judgment, Christ and his saints shall never part:—No separation after this; all the former clouds are vanished away, and a perfect tranquillity do they possess and enjoy with him; for where the master is, there ought the servant to be also, “And I go to prepare a place for you,” and I “will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” Christ counts not himself full, till he has all his members about him; here the church is called the “fulness of him that filleth all things.”

SECOND, How he gives his people rest.—By meriting it for them: By his death we may all live; by his stripes we are healed; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. If Christ had not died, what must have become of the whole human race? All must have been inevitably ruined; but Christ died for us, that by him we may obtain salvation, and by his merits we may enjoy an eternal rest with him.

HE gives his people rest freely. They who have a desire for this salvation, or the water of life, may have it, “I will give unto them who is a thirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.” This is

a free gift, and it is given freely. “ Ho, every
 “ one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and
 “ he that hath no money, come ye, buy and
 “ eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without
 “ money, and without price.” The rest that
 the people of God enjoy here, and that which
 they hope to be possessors of hereafter, is freely
 given.

HE gives them inward rest and peace in their
 minds, by the operation of his Spirit upon their
 souls. He makes them attentive to their ac-
 tions, studying to do what is praise-worthy, that
 so they may enjoy quietness of mind, and can
 say they have the testimony of their conscience
 bearing them witness of the sincerity and simpli-
 city of their hearts. By his Spirit he comforts
 and supports them, “ I will pray the Father,
 “ and he shall give you another comforter, that
 “ he may abide with you for ever, even the Spi-
 “ rit of truth.” He it is that Christ sent into the
 world to supply his place. He gives his people
 inward rest also, by enlightening and enlivening
 them: Great peace have they who now see the
 light, who formerly sat in darkness: What rest
 and ease do they enjoy, who are now made a-
 live, who were formerly dead in trespasses and
 sins.

HE gives them eternal rest, by passing a definitive sentence upon them, in the sight of the whole world,—in the great day of judgment, when the quick and the dead shall appear before him: Then he places his own on his right-hand, and pronounces the most comfortable of all sentences, “Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” The people of God often, in this world, have not a sentence given to their righteous cause; and thus was David treated, when he was innocently reproached: But the case is now altered, for then they stand before an impartial Judge, who will do righteously, and judge every man according to his works, bestowing this rest in the most regular way; which God of his infinite mercy grant we may all obtain!

THIS brings me to the next general head, which was to shew,

THIRD, Why he gives them this rest.—Because it is his own good pleasure to do so. God’s common way of bestowing benefits on people, is in the use of means, he takes that opportunity to do them good, as in hearing the word he be-

flows faith, and they who come to him under a sense of the burden of sin, he gives them rest; yet, for all this, we must take heed of attributing our receiving benefits to the use of means; we must make application to God for his grace, to aid and assist us to every good work: If it were otherwise, then there must be of necessity some proportion betwixt the merit, and the thing merited; the one must be as valuable as the other; otherways the favours will still be of grace, and not of debt; but what proportion can there be betwixt any thing we can do, and this inward and eternal rest? We can never think otherwise, but it is God's good pleasure to give it, "Fear
 " not little flock, for it is your Father's good
 " pleasure to give you the kingdom." Our Saviour here lets them know, that their title to this kingdom, which is nothing else here than that place of honour and dignity, that state of rest and tranquillity, which believers should enjoy and possess hereafter, is not from merit, but gift; from the free motives of divine will, and not from the first good motions and inclinations of their will. Their title is secured by his, and his Father's good-will, and therefore they may depend upon it.

BECAUSE he has promised it. God obliges

himself by his promise to perform his word: That he has promised to give rest to sinners upon their coming unto him, is plain, from the words of the text; and he is faithful to his promise. He has promised to give them great and good things, yea, the desire of their hearts, if they will but depart from evil, and do good, and delight themselves in the Lord. He will exalt them to inherit the land that wait on him; their place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, “their water shall be given them, and their bread shall be made sure.” If we will but come unto, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we “may be saved, and enjoy eternal rest: Saved from sin, safe in the enjoyment of God for ever, in a continual rest and peace with him.

HE gives them this rest, because it is for his people’s advantage;—they who come unto God by Jesus Christ. The great God of nature has a particular regard and concern for them, for “no good thing will he uphold from them who walk uprightly. For the Lord he is a sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory to all who love and fear him.” This is great encouragement for the people of God; he promises to do every thing for their advantage: Rest

is certainly for their advantage, otherwise they would not be so desirous of it, as sometimes to long, “ and desire to depart, that so they may “ be with God ;” nay, the Spirit and the voice from heaven says so, that this rest is a part of their blessedness, “ And I heard a voice from “ heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the “ dead that die in the Lord.”

HE gives them rest ; because it is reasonable that they who have toiled and born the burden of the heat of the day should have rest. We cannot, we must not, we dare not entertain such harsh and unbecoming thoughts of God, as to think he will employ any all day in his vineyard, and then withhold from them their wages: No, he is a just and gracious God, and all his works are done in righteousness, “ Seeing it “ is a righteous thing with God to recompence “ tribulation to them that trouble you.” Remission and relaxation from hard labour is reasonable, that they who endured hard things, and laboured to the utmost ; who have been persecuted from city to city for the faith, should find a rest, and have a release from such sort of labour. And this is also very agreeable to what is promised, “ There remaineth a rest for the people of God.” I come,

FOURTH, To conclude with a practical application.

IF it is so, that labouring and heavy laden sinners, upon their coming to Christ Jesus may have rest; then here may be inferred just ground of reproof, to them who expect rest any other way than by forsaking sin, and coming unto Jesus Christ: They are reproveable upon several accounts, because they neglect their own advantage, they flight the only remedy, they turn their backs on the dearest love. People are too apt to imagine they shall find rest here below, but they will find themselves miserably mistaken when too late. Indeed the people of God may have an inward peace and quiet in their consciences, but heaven-born souls are never contented to sit down, and fix their abode in any thing below heaven: We must never think of resting, till we have done working and sinning. Our life and labour must end together.

IF it is so, that labouring sinners, upon their coming unto Jesus Christ, may have rest; then here is matter of encouragement to repenting and returning sinners;—Christ will give you rest. How sensibly refreshed are those people who labour all the day, with the rest of sleep at night:

It makes them begin their following work with greater activity and pleasure, and encourages them in the performance of it; ought not this to encourage you, O believer, in the performance of duties, under the greatest difficulties! if it were even in persecutions. There remains a rest for you, of Christ's purchasing, and of God's giving, which will be for your eternal advantage. You may be deprived of it while in this world, yet it remains for you in the world to come. The initials of it you may have here, but the perfection of it is reserved to an after and better state.

It reproves those who expect the perfection of their rest in this world. We may have a foretaste of that eternal rest with God, but the consummation and completion of this remains unto another day. The Sabbath-day, and the rest of Canaan, were but faint shadows and types: We must not then think to have our complete rest in this world, because grace will not suffer you to rest here: Its tendencies are beyond this world, it will be looking for the blessed hope. A good and pious man views himself as a stranger and pilgrim upon this earth, seeking a better and more desirable country, and is always suspicious of danger in every state and place; never fully sa-

tified with any earthly peace and tranquillity, but still beating and rousing up the sluggish heart, * *Arise, depart, this is not your rest ; because it is polluted, and it shall destroy you.* Its further tendencies, and continual jealousies, will keep you from sitting long still in this world. Grace is not, like the rich man in the gospel, for building barns here, and saying to its self, enjoy thy peace and ease ; no, but its tendencies are of a higher nature, and reach beyond all worldly grandeur, and sublunary enjoyments.

YOUR corruptions will keep you from rest here ; they will continually exercise your spirits, and keep you upon your watch. Saints have hard work every day, to guard their hearts from going astray, and to prevent sin ; to lament it, and always to watch and fear, to mortify, kill, and subdue it. Sin will not suffer you to be long at rest, but will, someway or other, disturb your tranquillity :—This the apostle Paul found from experience : Sin and corruption were so far from allowing the apostle to rest here, that they would not allow him to do good ; he was wearied out with continual combats, and was panting and breathing with very moving and pathetic exclamations to be delivered, “ O wretched man that

* Micah ii. 10.

“ I am, who shall deliver me from the body of “ this death.” And if a bad heart full of corruption will not break your rest here, then you may expect that the devil will. One would think that our first parents might have enjoyed a state of rest and tranquillity; but alas! we, their offspring and posterity, find it too true, that the devil soon disturbed their peace, and broke their rest; and, as it was with them, we may expect to find work enough to resist his temptations, his cunning, his destructive suggestions and inclinations,

IF we do not contentedly comply with his temptations, as the wicked do. The apostle Peter tells us we have an adversary to grapple with, “ Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” He is called the “ Accuser of the brethren,” and rather than we should be at rest, he will accuse us to one another; he will accuse man to God, and God to man, so very bold and daring is this adversary that we have to encounter, who is the disturber of the peace of the human race, and so restless in his attempts, that he will endeavour to disturb you, either by circumventing, or assailing you.

WICKED men will keep you from resting here.

These are the devil's servants and instruments, who delight in disturbing the peace of the godly: Their very name tells their turbulent dispositions, "My soul is among lions, I ly even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men; whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." The psalmist David lived in the midst of a generation of fierce, cruel, and bloody men, who were nothing but mere fire-brands and incendiaries, who devised and designed his mischief. There is not any but has their adversaries to grapple with, and therefore cannot expect to rest in security here below.

OUR work is not yet finished, and therefore we must not think to rest. We know not indeed how near our work is at a period: If its approach is near, it is matter of comfort and encouragement to the believer that he is drawing so much the nearer his eternal rest. The labourer never thinks of rest till he has perfectly finished his day's work; neither must Christians think to enjoy their eternal rest with God, until they have finished their course, and wrought out the labour of their salvation in this world. Let us then be content to enter into our rest, as Christ entered into his: He first suffered, and then rest-

ed ; he finished his work, and now reigns above, with all who have, by labour, overcome.

If it is so, that burdened sinners may have rest upon their coming unto Jesus Christ, then how great ground have we to lament and mourn, to see so many despising this rest that Christ offers and will give : It might move the most adamant and obdurate heart, to see the generality of mankind so very stupidly ignorant, as to shut their ears against all invitations to enjoy rest : It looks as if people were infatuated, and that they see something in the world to be of more value than this, which is the great and only thing that they should be concerned about, to find rest to their souls ; it is the pearl of great value, it is the one thing necessary ; but alas ! too many are of Martha's temper, who cumber themselves about many things, and in the mean time neglect the one thing needful. We are too solicitous about what we should eat, and what we should drink, and are careless about that bread, of which, if we once eat, we shall hunger no more. We are assiduous about labouring for the bread that perisheth, but neglectful about that bread that endures to everlasting life, which life and rest the Son of man will give unto us.

IF Jesus Christ gives rest, then let us be very cautious how we live, lest we enter not into it. We should keep a watch over our hearts, “ for out of it are the issues of life :” From thence proceed all the actions as of the natural, so of the spiritual life, which tend either to eternal life, or everlasting death. We should keep a watch over our thoughts, words, and actions ; these may be all impediments in our way to obtain this eternal rest, therefore we should be very cautious how we act ; and may God, of his infinite mercy, direct all our actions to the honour of his name !

IF Christ offers rest. Then let us all be exhorted so to live, as that, when we come to die, we may have an abundant entrance administered unto us, into that everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ** Wherefore, the rather brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* Our eternal happiness or misery depends upon the spending of the small portion of time we have here, so as to approve ourselves to God, and to be deemed by him subjects for everlasting happiness.

DEAR brethren, live dependently upon Christ ;

** 2 Pet. i. 10. 11,*

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go through the world leaning upon the beloved, the best friend that ever man had. If we depend not upon him, something or other will be turning us aside, and so we shall come short of that rest.

LIVE independently on the world.—That is, but as a broken reed, that will not support you, and which many times proves fatal, and ensnares the soul, and deprives it of rest here; but it is the divine Being alone who can aid and assist his creatures, to prepare them for an eternal rest with him in glory.

OFTEN look to the reward:—Consider what it is you are taking pains for, and for whom. Is it not for yourselves, O Christians? Is it not for your own eternal welfare? Your goodness profiteth not God, it makes him no more happy, but it is the very way to make yourselves so.

BE frequently exercised in the duty of prayer. This has been, and still will be a mean of helping against temptations: It has done wonderful things, and the prayer in faith will still be heard. Let us then always be found in a praying frame, saying with the most profound reverence and regard, Upon thee, O Lord, will we

cast all our burdens, and depend only upon thee,
all the remaining part of our lives. Do thou,
O God, by thy goodness and mercy, bring us
at last unto that rest, which thou hast prepared
above for thy saints.

S E R M O N XV.

P S A L M lv. 22.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee : He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

THE afflictions of the godly have been so very grievous and heavy, and at the same time so apparently manifest, as to make their enemies, by way of derision, cry out, “ Where “ is now thy God?” Yet, when the righteous man is in a situation, when he knows not whether to turn to the right-hand, or to the left, it

is matter of much comfort to him, that God is his hope and his support:—He who is the rock of ages,—he who is the only sure refuge.

THE psalmist David, when surrounded with dangers, when beset with enemies, and when overwhelmed with troubles, made it his constant care to apply to this refuge for relief, “ I cried
“ unto God, and he delivered me out of all my
“ troubles.” David, when he penned this psalm, seems to have been labouring under much distress; and very probably it was on the account of these that he composed it. And after representing his own dismal situation, he cries out, by way of extasy, and from an exalted sense of God’s goodness, in the words of the text, “ Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.” When dangers surround thee from without, and when thy awakened conscience assails thee from within, fly unto God, who “ shall not suffer
“ thee to be moved.”

“ *Cast thy burden upon the Lord.*” As if the psalmist had said, ‘ Depend not upon thine
‘ own help and assistance, for at the best it is but
‘ weakness; but depend upon God, who is all-
‘ sufficient.’ Although the psalmist has this soliloquy with his own soul, yet he directs his speech

to all good men, when in such circumstances, and would advise them to follow his example, and "cast their burdens upon the Lord." This word is sometimes put for *trust*, as in that text, "Trust in the Lord, and do good." Sometimes it is put for *commit*, as, "Commit thy way unto the Lord."

"CAST *thy burden* upon the Lord." This might, indeed, be understood *objectively*, but I rather chuse to speak of it *subjectively*: Because *burden* has so near a relation to a person's self. If understood so, one cannot be said to cast this burden, and not himself also, upon the Lord. Burden, in the margin, is rendered *gift*. The afflictions of the godly are sometimes called gifts; but from the words that here follow, it seems rather to be restrained to afflictions, of whatever kind or degree.

"CAST thy burden *upon the Lord*." Persons under afflictions, when they cast their burdens upon the Lord, must fully believe that he is an omnipotent, omniscient, and all-sufficient God: A God that is ready to do for them, far above what they can either ask or think. A God that is ready, able, and willing to supply their wants. A God that is able to relieve them under all

their troubles, support them under all their discouragements, and assist them in the performance of all their duties. Certainly the psalmist had this opinion of God, and so certainly must all they who desire, who wish to cast their burdens upon him; and as a motive for so doing, remember you have the assertion of David in the text, “He will sustain thee;” he will support and nourish thee, and do for thee far above what thy indigencies deserve or demand.

THE simple meaning, the plain sense of the words are, Whatsoever thou wouldst have the Lord to bestow upon thee, cast it first upon him by faith in prayer, lay all thy business, thy concerns, and thy demands upon the shoulders of the Almighty, with a confident expectation of a good issue: Upon thy doing so, God will vouchsafe thee all the assistance that thou standest in need of, and that which he sees to be needful and fit for thee, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” I shall endeavour to shew,

I. WHAT is supposed by casting our burdens upon the Lord.

II. *SOME* things that may be called burdens to the godly, which they should cast upon the Lord.

III. *WHY* they should cast their burdens upon the Lord.

IV. *How* the Lord sustains his people.

V. *WHY* he sustains them who put their trust in him.

VI. *APPLY.*

FIRST, What is supposed by casting our burdens upon the Lord.

It implies, or it supposes a person being sensible of his own weakness, and inability to support himself under the pressure of a heavy burden. The spirit is sometimes so overwhelmed with difficulties, the life so burdened with cares and anxieties, that it can hardly be imagined a person can cast his burdens upon the Lord, without being very sensible of the great, nay, I had almost said, dead weight of them. As a confirmation of this.—The godly who have implored God's help and assistance, have first been sensible

of their own indigencies. The psalmist is an eminent proof of this; * *Have mercy upon me, O God, for I am weak: O Lord heal me, for I am sore vexed.* When Hezekiah entreated the Lord to undertake for him, he first acknowledges a sense of his own inability and insufficiency, “ O Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me.” If we would consult our own reason, we would find it very agreeable that it should be so in worldly and bodily cases. We find, that they who come to a physician, come with a sense of their infirmities; that is to say, they are so indisposed, that they cannot help themselves. If this is indeed the case in temporal, it is no less so in spiritual concerns. Do thou, O God, impress our minds with a deep sense of our own unworthiness, and of our inability to bear under any burden which it may please thee to lay upon us!

CASTING our care upon the Lord, supposes a dependance upon God under all the troubles and burdens we may meet with, or ly under, in our journey through life. Some there are, who never think upon God under their troubles, but look unto, and depend upon second causes. They are ready to run to any mean, whether lawful or unlawful. Some have taken the most

* Psal. vi. 2.

extravagant means imaginable for their relief. The sacred records afford us many instances of this ; but I shall only mention the case of Ahaziel, who sought after false gods when reduced to, and brought under the burden of sickness, * *Go*, says he to his messengers, *and enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease.* What an irregular step did Ahaziel here take,—how far was he from depending, from casting his burden upon the Lord. Are any of you, my dear hearers, under a burden of sin? Look to God, as a God of pardoning and subduing iniquity. Do any of you lie under a burden of trouble? Look up to God, for it is he who has laid that trouble upon you, and it is he only who can remove it. He makes trouble to operate upon the body, in order to purge the soul from all its dross. May we, most awful Majesty, bear patiently all the troubles which thou art pleased to lay upon us! And may we always be remembering, that though the troubles which afflict the just are many, yet the Lord will deliver us out of them all. Let us consider, my fellow Christians, that troubles or afflictions arise not out of the dust, there is one who has a hand in every thing that concerns us, and who is well acquainted with all our thoughts and ac-

* 1 Kings i. 2.

tions: Who does every thing agreeable to his will, and who does all things perfect. Let us therefore say with Hezekiah, * *Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.*

CASTING our burden upon the Lord, supposes a humble frame of spirit. Some there are, who say they stand in need of neither help nor assistance; they are rich, and stand in need of nothing, they are full, and want no supply; they will neither obey the voice of providences nor ordinances; nor word nor rod has any effect upon them, because they are not truly humbled. Burdens they may have, but the proper way to get rid of them they neglect: And how many are they who, under the pressure of heavy burdens, are ready to cry out with the proud tyrant of old, * *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice; I know not the Lord.* But we must act otherwise than this; we must have a lower frame and temper of mind than Pharaoh. Let us rather be clothed with humility, as Jacob was when he was afflicted by his brother Esau: He, in that critical situation, laid his burden upon the Lord, with all humility, and said, “ O God of my father Abraham, I

* Isa. xxxviii. 3.

† Exod. v. 2.

“ am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,
 “ and of all the truths which thou hast shewed
 “ unto thy servant.” Happy were it for us if
 afflictions were improven to such an end as this ;
 —to make us cleave more closely to God, and
 to walk before him with more sincerity and
 truth.

CASTING our burden upon the Lord, supposes
 that a person puts faith upon the attributes of God.
 Indeed this does not differ much from an argu-
 ment already advanced, wherein they that cast
 their care upon God do depend upon him : But
 as that is the fruit of our faith, so this is the way
 and manner of performing that dependance.
 Sometimes this is called a trusting in God ; some-
 times a looking up unto God, that so they may
 be saved * *Trust in him at all times, ye people,
 pour out your hearts before him.* And as a motive
 to encourage them to this, he tells them, that
 “ God is a refuge.” Cast your burdens upon
 the Lord, for he is a “ strong tower, he is a
 “ city of refuge to all who fly unto him by faith.”
 David knew, that with God there was “ plen-
 “ teous redemption to be had ;” and that the
 power of God was able to withstand all the pow-
 ers of, and to overbalance all the discouragement.

* Psa. lxii. 8.

ments the believer might meet with from man. Abraham, against hope, believed in hope, and staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Abraham trusted, through faith, in the power of God, in order to accomplish the great things he had promised. He resolved those things into the power and promise of God, that could not be fully comprehended by the light of nature. Grant, most faithful God, that our faith may be strengthened, our hearts renewed, our burdens released, and our souls hereafter made happy, in the company of Abraham and of his God for evermore!

CASTING our care upon the Lord, supposes that we leave the issue and event of all things unto him. Unless we do this, we may as well do nothing, and stand by as so many idle spectators, till it is too late to begin. If we be reserved, and rather seem to have a design of our own to accomplish, we do most effectually mistrust God, and think, that either he will not be so good as his word, or, that he is not able to perform what he has promised. But the scriptures are infallable, and they tell us that God is true, and that he most certainly will do all that is said of him; on which account, we have no reason

to doubt either his willingness or ability to ease us of our burdens. Let us rather say as David said in the presence of Zadok, * *Behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good in his sight.* David was so very far from being anxiously concerned about the event of things, that with the greatest solace, and with the most contented mind, could refer the issue of every undertaking to God. In like manner also did old Eli act under all his troubles. Great King and eternal Father, may we all be enabled to cry out with holy Job, "It is the hand of the Lord, let him do what he pleaseth."

SECOND, Some things that may be called burdens to the godly, which they should cast upon the Lord.

SIN is a burden to a godly person, and is that which ought to make him fly to God to be saved. The apprehensions and ideas, which the godly and wicked men have of sin and its nature, are quite different. The former considers it as an intollerable burden, not able to be born: The latter thinks it is but a light and trivial matter. When we consider the heinous nature of sin, its being, as the apostle says, "The transgression

* 2 Sam. xv. 26.

“ of the law.” When we consider its nature, and contemplate upon its awful effects, it is no wonder that we should see the godly and upright man count it a burden, and fly to the Lord for ease, for help, and for refuge. It was sin that made the psalmist cry out, * *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: As a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* It was the weight of sin that pressed the angels down from heaven: It was the weight of sin that drove Adam and his fair consort out of paradise; and it is the weight of sin, that shall press those, who do not repent of it, down to hell.

THE guilt of sin may be considered as a burden to a godly person. This is that which binds us over to punishment: This, this makes us liable to, and brings us under all our miseries, both in this life, and in the next. A guilty criminal, no doubt, would be ready to embrace every mean in order to be delivered from punishment. Neither can the godly man be at ease under the guilt, under the heavy burden of sin, since they are thereby in danger of utter ruin. Not but that all true believers have the guilt of their sins fully pardoned in their justification; but yet they may want the evidences of this burden, which, no

* Psal. xxxviii, 4.

doubt, must be a great trouble to all who labour under it. A person may be lying under guilt unrepented of, as it is supposed David was; when Nathan the prophet warned him of his sin. Upon this David is sensible of guilt, and counts it a heavy burden, and flies to God for pardon and remission of sins *. It is only such as are burdened with the guilt of sin that Christ invites to come unto him, so that they may find rest, † *Come unto me, says he, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

THE power and prevalency of sin may, in like manner, be considered as a burden to the saints, or godly man. Although sin may not, cannot reign in them as a *lord*, yet it may have power over them as a *tyrant*, and prevail with them, though much against their inclination. This was exactly the case with the apostle Paul, “ But I see,” says he, “ another law in my “ members, warring against the law of my “ mind, and bringing me into captivity to the “ law of sin which is in my members.” And as an evidence of the prevalency of sin being a burden to the godly man, the same apostle further adds, “ O wretched man that I am, who shall “ deliver me from the body of this death.”

* Psa. li.

† Matth, xi. 28.

TEMPTATION to sin may also be considered as a burden to the godly man. The people of God have temptations, sometimes from without, and sometimes from within: Their own evil hearts are too often ready to betray them within, and the great enemy of mankind is no less ready to besiege them from without. Sometimes the godly are tempted to sin, even by their nearest friends and relations: Witness Job, who withstood the most persuasive eloquence of his wife. She with the greatest energy accosted him, when tormented by many troubles, with these cutting words, "Curse God and die." He was no less tempted by his other friends: Friends, did I say? Nay, I should rather have called them his most inveterate enemies; these also he withstood: He even baffled all the assaults, all the attacks which Satan made upon his virtue and holiness, and cried out with the most emphatic warmth and elevation of soul, "Shall I receive good at the hand of God, and shall I not receive evil. The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." If temptations to sin were not the saint's burden, why did our Saviour exhort us to pray against it in these memorable words of St Matthew's, * *Lead us not into temptation, but de-*

* Matth. vi, 13.

liver us from evil. No saints are above the temptation of the devil, however holy they may be. He sometimes tempts to the omission, sometimes to the commission of iniquity: Some he puffs up with pride, as he did St Paul; others he tempts to presumption and idolatry, as he did our blessed Saviour, * *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down. All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

MOTIONS and inclinations to sin are sometimes the saint's burden, for the subduing of these we ought to fly to God. Though a believer should be kept from the act of sin, yet the very motions to sin are troublesome and grievous to a gracious soul. How burdensome were the inclinations to sin, to the psalmist; as is manifest, from his earnestness in begging of God to save him from them, lest they should break forth into action, which might be the occasion of his utter ruin, † *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.* If so be God had left him to himself, it is more than probable these inclinations might have brought forth evil actions, which, to a man like David, would certainly have been a great burden.

* Matth. iv. 6. 9.

† Psal cxli, 4.

TROUBLES are burdens which we should cast upon the Lord. The people of God have troubles of different kinds, "Man," says Job, "is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards." Who of Adam's sons are exempted from them? For "many are the troubles which afflict the just, but the Lord at length will," how numerous soever they may be, "the Lord," I say, "will deliver them out of them all." Here is great encouragement indeed, for every man, for every sincere Christian, to cast the burden of his troubles upon the Lord; because he has promised to deliver him out of them; and not only so, but has promised to make him "an heir of his kingdom;" and "God is true," in every thing he at any time hath promised. We find, that troubles are so interwoven with the life of the godly, that no sooner is one past, than another comes upon them. Sometimes they solace themselves with the hope of deliverance, when on a sudden the gloom becomes more awful. For says the psalmist, * *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water spouts: All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.* How miserably was Job harassed with a progression of troubles, yet he trusted in God. But as the troubles of the godly are many, I shall here enumerate a few of them,

* Psal. xlii. 7.

though, perhaps, none of the most considerable.

BODILY INDISPOSITION is an affliction or trouble, to which we should look to God for relief from. No doubt, but the proper means may be used for our recovery and deliverance from such trouble or indisposition; yet those means must not be entirely depended upon, which will not prove effectual for the establishment nor recovery of health, without the blessing of God. A sickly, infirm, and pained body, renders a person very useless and unhelpful, either to himself or others. Job experienced these bodily calamities, * *For he was smitten with sore boils, from the sole of his foot, even unto the crown of his head.* Neither was David exempted from them; but he, like Job, laid his burden upon the Lord, and said, "O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed." Hezekiah in like manner had his troubles, as we are told by the prophet Isaiah, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. Then Hezekiah turned his face towards the wall, and prayed unto the Lord." And the effect of this prayer was, his deliverance from affliction.

FAMILY TROUBLES are burdens to a good

* Job ii. 7.

† Psal. vi. 2.

man. It is certainly a great trouble to a religious parent, to see his children, or any one of them, turn prodigal, and steal, commit fornication, adultery, a mocker of religion, and all good things: Or, wherever there is a difference or disagreement between children or their parents, there also are many vexatious troubles. Witness how great trouble David had in his family, by reason of Absalom's rebellion, which not only affected the people of the family, but too many of the kingdom, who were too ready to favour Absalom and his unnatural design. His sons were no less troublesome and grievous to Eli, who were wicked and irreligious, according to the account of Samuel, * *Now, says Samuel, the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.* Their abominable practices were not only a trouble to the old man himself, but caused much wrath from the Lord.

FEAR OF DEATH is sometimes a trouble to the godly man. , We find that the most eminent saints, and heroic believers, have been troubled at the thoughts of their change: And no wonder; for many times the godly themselves, although they may have the truth of grace in them, yet they may want the evidences of their being

* 1 Sam. ii. 12.

gracious souls, and this works in them such a concern, as renders them often afraid to die: Nay, I doubt not but the wicked themselves may sometimes be less afraid to die than the godly, because they too seldom allow themselves to think upon their dissolution, and the consequences of death; whereas the godly often, as the apostle says, ** Through fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage.* These are troubles to a good man, and to a sincere believer; yet he continues faithful under them, unto the end, being well assured of a glorious reward.

NOR need I mention the cares of worldly business, and the concerns for their immortal part: Neither need I tell you of the constant care they are employed in, how they may please God, and render themselves acceptable to him at the great day: Or, why should I relate the duties of every godly person, who, if they are worthy of that appellation, must also be well acquainted with them. These, these my fellow Christians, are a few of the troubles which afflict the good man; but he, in the midst of danger, and when surrounded with such adversaries, remains as unmoved as the rock that is beat upon by the angry waves of the sea. May we, O God! when af-

* Heb. ii. 15.

failed by troubles and death, be enabled to cast our burden upon thee, and to say with the good man, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth. Ho-
 “ fannah to the Son of David, blessed is he who
 “ cometh in the name of the Lord to save.

THIRD, Why we should cast our burdens upon the Lord.

I WOULD rather shew the reasonableness of this duty ; because there are many in the world who are ready to say, God is not able to support nor sustain those who put their trust in him. They are even apt to ridicule ministers for advising, and people for following their advice, to cast their burdens upon the Lord. Nay, it is not only the custom now-a-days to act thus, for in former times they did the same things, of which the scriptures afford us several instances. For instance, * Sennacherib’s message by his servants to the Jews, “ That they should not believe the
 “ words of Hezekiah,” who persuaded the people to trust in the Lord.

THE reasonableness of this duty is plain from the following arguments : God commands us to put our trust in, and to cast our burdens up-

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 10.—20.

on him : God commands us to do nothing but what he very well knows has a tendency to do us good. The words of our text are a strong proof, “ Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and “ he shall sustain thee : He shall not suffer the “ righteous to be moved.” Sometimes this command is expressed by other words, as, “ De- “ light thyself also in the Lord.—Commit thy “ ways unto the Lord.” These may tend to shew us how reasonable this duty is. I know not but God’s design in making use of such variety of expression may be, in order to the more effectually placing our entire dependance upon him, “ Submit yourselves to God,” says the apostle James, “ draw nigh to God ;” *i. e.* we must not be proud nor high-minded, so as to think we are sufficient to bear our own burdens ; we must be sensible of our weakness, and of God’s ability to support us, and of his positive command to reason us into it. It is highly necessary, therefore, seeing it is God’s command, to take heed how we trample upon the divine precept ; for in doing so, we not only disobey the command, but disregard and undervalue the love of God.

THE reasonableness of this duty appears further, from God’s promise to help, support, and sustain those who cast their care or burden upon

him. God's promises are, a large inheritance, and the saints great security, which appears plain from the words of the text, "Cast thy burden
" upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee;" whether they be troubles, cares, sorrows, or any other troublesome burdens, for *God is almighty*.

God is all-sufficient, or omnipotent, therefore we may, and ought to cast our burdens upon him. God has not only given us his promise, but he is able to perform that promise. If we do not believe God's power to be infinite, we destroy the nature of the God-head. And to confirm us more in this, we have the express word of God declaring, in the book of Genesis*, unto Abraham, *I am the Almighty God: Walk before me, and be thou perfect*. This declaration of God's to Abraham, was to the end, that Abraham might secure his obedience, and depend entirely upon God. What can we depend for, or how can we think of being supported, if not from the Almighty God, who has shewn his power in sustaining and supporting his people under their greatest troubles and burdens in this world, and who will free them from them all in the world to come.

* Gen. xvii. 1.

IT is reasonable ; for there is no fuitable fufficiency in any creature to fupport or to fustain us. Human help does often fail ; mans affiftance proves brittle ; his ftrength is but weaknefs. The people of God have been perfectly fatisfied of this, and none more fo than holy Job, “ I have heard
 “ many fuch things ; miserable comforters are
 “ ye all.” And fays the pfalmift, “ I looked
 “ on my right-hand, and beheld, but there was
 “ no man that did know me, refuge failed me ;
 “ no man cared for my foul.”

IT is reasonable, becaufe the great defign of temptations are, to hinder us from cafting our burdens upon the Lord. Satan very well knew, that if we caft our cares and burdens upon the Lord, his kingdom cannot long ftand ; therefore he makes ufe of the ftongeft arguments and temptations, to make us leffen our refpect for God, and our dependance upon him. To accomplifh this end, he makes ufe of the moft proper inftruments as means. Of which the cafe of Job is a ftriking proof. The devil, after uſing all his arguments to no purpoſe, engages Job's own wife, as a mean to the utter deſtruction of her husband, to as little purpoſe. Beware then of this common enemy, who goes about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour : Beware of him,

I say, and cast your burdens only upon the Lord, for he can sustain thee.

WE should cast our burdens upon the Lord, because they who have not done so, but depended upon an arm of flesh, have been destroyed. Some are so proud, as to disdain the help or assistance of God; nay, they refuse it, they mock at it, they undervalue it. For though they do not acknowledge this openly, yet their practice is a plain manifestation. Such who go about their worldly business, and never call upon God, can expect no good from his hand. How can he expect the reward of the righteous, who hath not loved righteousness? or he the reward of his labour, who hath stood all the day idle? Pharaoh disobeyed God, and the effect of his disobedience was the total ruin of himself and his people. Saul, when he went to enquire of the familiar spirit, concerning the disaster that afterwards befel him, was punished severely by God; to whom he should rather have applied, and who was only able to keep him in possession of that throne, which he, by his abominable intercourse with infernal spirits, had justly lost. Thus Saul being forced from his kingdom, was afterwards brought to confess it had been better for him, if he had acquiesced with this reasonable

duty, and to have cast his burden upon the Lord. For disobeying God, Senacherib and his warlike army met with a terrible disaster, as is related in Second Chronicles, * *And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off the mighty men of valour, and the leaders, and the captains, in the camp. And they that came forth of his own bowels slew him with the sword.*

FOURTH, How the Lord sustains his people. The Lord sustains his people, both morally and physically. He sustains them morally, by making them, by instruction, acquainted with those external helps which may tend to their comfort and support, under the different dispensations of providence. These outward, or, in other words, these external means, are generally such as God makes use of by his Spirit, to convey grace into the hearts of poor creatures; and these are, the word, ordinances, prayer, meditation, &c. As an evidence of the truth of this, the psalmist David makes application to the word of God, as a suitable mean, whereby he expected to find help and support, † *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of*

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.

† Psal. xix. 7.—11.

the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: And in keeping of them there is great reward. When David was under great troubles, and much perplexed what to do, and how to manage himself, then he uses the external mean, and goes to the sanctuary, a place of more immediate help to the people of God, “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.” Such whom God supports, by acquainting them with the outward means, so as they may be effected thereby,—believe that God is just and righteous in all his actions,—that their sins deserve worse than any thing they have yet met with,—that their case is not singular, but has been the lot of many of God’s people, to ly under heavy burdens; and that these burdens and afflictions have been sanctified to them for their souls good, so as to make them humble and penitent. These are the effects oftentimes of an external or outward mean.

BUT God sustains his people physically, or inwardly, by his holy Spirit. The people of God being very sensible of help from his holy Spirit, have been very earnest with God to bestow his

Spirit upon them. As saith the psalmist, "Up-
 " hold me with thy Spirit." Nay, the Spirit of
 God does not only support them more immedi-
 ately under troubles, but also it gives us the best
 evidence of our being the children of God. For
 saith St Paul, " The Spirit itself beareth witness
 " with our Spirit, that we are the children of
 " God." It is an expression to the same import,
 this " Whereby we know that he abides in us,
 " by the spirit which he hath given us." The
 Spirit of God does many, and different ways,
 afford support to the wearied soul; as by com-
 posing and quieting his disturbed thoughts under
 affliction. Frequently the spirit of man is en-
 compassed about as with " muddy waters." The
 reason of this may be, because when we are in
 the body we are still subject to passions, which
 vex, fret, and disturb us. But the holy Spirit
 of God is without any such mixture, and there-
 fore must certainly be the properest help under
 such circumstances. Sometimes it sustains us, by
 fixing our hearts on God: At other times, when
 we know not which way to turn ourselves, when
 our way seems to be shut up, as it were, with
 briars and thorns; and when we seem to walk
 in darkness, being without light, yet even then
 the Spirit may drop down such unexpected com-
 fort to the soul, as is spoken of by the prophet

Isaiah, " Let such an one trust in the name of " the Lord, and stay upon his God." Sometimes the Spirit helps, by giving strength to bear up under troubles. The soul is sometimes in danger of being crushed and undone, if it were not the Spirit of God communicating help and assistance. Sometimes the Spirit sustains, by elevating and raising the minds of men, which was drooping down, heavenwards ;—by weaning them too from the things of the earth. Upon all which considerations, I think it well becomes us who are dependant creatures, to pray earnestly for the Spirit, that we may be upholden thereby.

F I F T H, Why God sustains them who put their trust in him.

HE does not sustain us on account of our merit. There is nothing in us that can deserve such a favour from the hand of God : For every thing we do is tainted with sin, which renders our actions altogether inadequate to the mercies we receive from heaven's Lord ; and therefore, even our best actions, can merit nothing from the hand of the Lord. We find, in many texts of scripture, the best of God's servants disclaiming any merit from their own actions. Thus Jacob, with

a due sense of his own demerit, said of old,
** O God of my Father Abraham, &c. I am not
 worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the
 truths which thou hast shewed unto thy servant:
 For with thy staff I passed over this Jordan, and
 now I am become two bands.* How many Papists
 blush at the reading of this scripture? How few
 in the world can pretend to be so good as Ja-
 cob? But yet, how many of these have pretend-
 ed to more selfish merit? This ought to be seri-
 ously considered, especially, seeing that God on-
 ly deserves the praise, and to him belongs all the
 merit of our actions. I know there are many
 who have been in low circumstances, and yet
 the Lord has sustained them, and done for them
 abundantly, as much as he had done for his faith-
 ful servant Jacob, who became two bands. To
 such persons I would only say, Never think that
 your merit is the occasion of such favours, but,
 on the contrary, say with good Jacob, “ I am
 “ not worthy of the least of all thy favours and
 “ mercies thou hast bestowed upon me.”

GOD sustains them who trust in him, because
 he is a merciful God. I just now told you that
 God sustains his people, not from any merit of
 their own, which may be considered as a nega-
 tive reason. So here is a positive reason, I say,

* Gen. xxxii. 9. 10.

because he is merciful. If God were to act with us in a way of strict justice, we could expect no favour from him; but, on the contrary, he might pour forth the severities of his wrath upon us. He sustains us, because he is a merciful God; and upon this account it also is that he saves us from sin here, and hereafter removes us beyond the reach of it. On this account it is, that we find the psalmist so often pleading with God for his mercies, while at the same time he disclaims against his own merit, * *Arise, for thou art our help, and redeem us for thy mercies sake.* David, when under great trouble, and when he saw no visible way to extricate himself;—no way to be sustained in; he then, in the humblest manner, acknowledges God to be the author of all the mercies, and of all the deliverances he had experienced in former times; and says, “When I
“ said my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord,
“ held me up.”

God sustains them who put their trust in him, and who cast their burdens upon him, because he hath so promised it; and “let God be true, though every man should be a liar.” He is a faithful God,—he never breaks his promise,—with him there is “no variableness, neither shadow-

* Psal. xliv. 26.

“ing of turning,” for he is the “same yesterday, to-day, and for evermore.” If these are true, as certainly they are, if the scripture is true which telleth us so, then God is certainly obliged, by virtue of his promise and faithfulness, to perform what is gone out of his mouth. What more proof need we have of God’s promising to support his people, than the words of our text, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, for he will sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” For “God is not man, that he should lie; neither is he the Son of Man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it; hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good.” As if he had said, God hath promised, and he shall perform every jot of that promise. If ye live agreeable to the dictates of conscience, and to his laws, ye will at last find that “God is true.”

God sustains his people, because of the near relation they stand in to him. Those who rightly put their trust in him, are accounted his children, and he their Father. The care and the pity God shews to his children, far exceed that of the fathers of the flesh. What parent is there that would not help his own child? What husband is it that would not help his own wife, un-

der the heavy burdens and difficulties they may meet with. Much readier than these is God to sustain his beloved people, because they are his own, "They are the sheep of his pasture." The psalmist David being very sensible of this, for I must allude to him again, pleads with God frequently, from this relationship he stood in with God, "O my God," says he, "I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me.—For thou art the God of my salvation."

GOD sustains his people, because they refuse all other help. It would be a very hard case for a man to depend wholly and entirely upon his friend, and yet that very friend to forsake him. But it is quite different with God, "He never said to any of the seed of Jacob, seek my face in vain." Never did he refuse help and assistance to any who thoroughly depended upon him: Nay, even in the greatest calamities and afflictions, the people of God have always made him their trust, and with their last breath have, with holy Job, cried out, "Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him." May we, O Lord, have our minds impressed with the same exalted sentiments; and learn, while under affliction, to "cast our burdens upon the Lord, so that at last we

“ may find rest from the heavy burden of sin,
 “ in thy heavenly kingdom.”

LASTLY, We may see from what has been advanced, how blessed a state the saints possess beyond all other persons ; for “ God supports
 “ and sustains them.” This does not only issue in their spiritual welfare, but also in their eternal happiness, * *He never suffers the righteous to be moved.* It not only points out the blessedness of the saints, but it reproves such as do not “ cast
 “ their burdens upon the Lord.” We not only learn from these words, that all good and humble men shall be blessed ; but we see also, how reprehensible the proud and lofty minded are, who think it below them to call upon the name, or assistance of the Almighty ; and who are more ready to say with Pharaoh, “ Who is
 “ the Lord ? I will not obey him ?” It reproves the covetous and worldly-minded, those who are too solicitous about the things of this life, and who care a little, but not enough, for the things that belongeth to life everlasting ; and it will not be surprising if God should reprove such, as he did the rich man in the gospel, with these cutting words, “ Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be
 “ required of thee, and to whom shall all these

* Mal. iii. 7.

“thy riches go to.” I hope my hearers will here pardon me, if I should take it upon me to answer, to none more likely than to a PRODIGAL, who, ignorant of anxiety and care, especially of that anxiety and care with which they were amassed, spends them with an equal profuseness and prodigality.

I AM afraid I have tired out your patience, and, without urging any other motive or reason,—to exhort you to follow peace with all men,—to love God,—and to live a holy life, so that you may die a happy death, shall conclude with the words of the text, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, for he shall sustain thee: He shall not suffer the righteous to be moved,”

S E R M O N XVI.

HEBREWS X. 39.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul,

IT is generally agreed, that the apostle Paul was the writer of this epistle, and that in it he is shewing the Hebrews how the gospel dispensation was preferable to the legal œconomy ; and in order to this, he, in the beginning of the epistle, recommends the Son of God, our Saviour, to them, in his person, Deity, and humani-

ty. He tells us, that he was a greater prophet than Moses, a greater priest than Aaron, a greater king than Melchizedick. He particularly argues against the insufficiency and weakness of the legal sacrifices, and against any other than that which was once offered up for sin, even the body of Christ Jesus.

“BUT we are not of them that draw back,” &c. which words divide themselves into a twofold state, viz. them that draw back, and them that believe. I need not insist long in examining these terms, they are almost self-evident. To draw back, or steal away, seems to be a metaphorical expression, taken from soldiers that fly from their colours, and from their captain. They who draw back in religion, are such as run from Christ Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, turning renegades and apostates like Julian, &c. The other is a believing state; such who truly and sincerely adhere to Christ and his blessed doctrine, and persevere therein to the end of their days.

A TWOFOLD and opposite event. Perdition on the one hand, and salvation on the other. The actual influence, and native consequence of apostacy, is destruction: Nothing saves apostates from eternal ruin: How dangerous then must it

be, to make shipwreck of our faith. The actual influence of faith is salvation ; they that believe shall be saved. Faith does not only relate things that are at a distance, but entitles the believer to eternal happiness.

NEGATIVELY, we are not of them that draw back : Positively, but of them that believe. Here is a determination of the believer's true state ; which insinuates, that among a professing people, there may be backsliders : We are not of them who draw back, we do not approve of their ways, we will not associate with them in their designs ; but we are of them who believe, *i. e.* However we may associate with them in our religious assemblies, yet we are none of them ; but such as maintain the precepts of the gospel, and stand by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. However much man may speak against us as evil doers, and rail at us as the grossest sinners, yet we have a good testimony that we are not such. We are not of them that draw back, but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.

THE native consequence of apostacy is perdition : Whoever draws back unto perdition, God has no pleasure in them. Tacitus says of the old Germans that fled their colours, *Transfugas*

arboribus suspendunt, i. e. They hang up runaways, according to both martial and civil law. Runaways are to be received as enemies, and may be killed wherever they are found. What must then be the state of runaways and apostates from the King of heaven?

THEY that believe shall be saved. The gospel-covenant is held forth to us in this expression, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved." It is every Christians duty to endeavour to evidence to his own conscience, as well as to that of others, who, and of whom he is, "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." We make large professions of religion, pray let us evidence them by our practice; be in reality what we appear to be, such as we acknowledge ourselves to the world. Be not like them who profess to know God, but in works deny him: There is no reason to be ashamed of that profession, if the practice is agreeable to it. Let your steadfastness in the ways of God manifest to all, that you are only his; let your constant perseverance in the ways of piety and religion convince all men, that your God is the Lord.

A a

It is the former part of the verse that we purpose at this time to insist on, "But we are not of them that draw back to perdition." In discoursing upon this subject, we shall endeavour, through the divine aid, to prosecute the following method:

I. To shew, or lay down the nature of drawing back, or backsliding.

II. SHew some reasons why professors should take heed of this sin, where we may speak to the forceableness of the argument, in the text and context.

III. APPLY.

FIRST, The nature of drawing *back*. We shall more particularly insist upon this subject, as there are many of you here present who have been making an open profession of religion at the Lord's table. Let such never *draw back*, never deny in your lives, that which you have sworn to with your mouths. This drawing back that the apostle speaks of, is either in the heart, or in the life: The latter is the best evidence of the former, and the former lays a foundation for the latter. Where the heart is false, the life can

never be right ; and where heart and life are both apostatized from God, it is most melancholly, it is awful. Of the heart's apostacy, or drawing back, the psalmist gives an instance, * *For their hearts was not right with him* : They had drawn away their hearts from the living God : And as an evidence of degeneracy in their life, “ They “ were not stedfast in his covenant.” They broke their most solemn engagements. Hymeneus and Philetus are striking instances, that this drawing back is in the heart or soul. Here we purpose this question, in order to open up the subject, When may the heart or soul of man be said to draw back from God ? &c.

WHEN that backsliding is in the thoughts, the thoughts then turn their bent upon these that were formerly employed about good actions, and force them upon committing sin, which may be truly said to be a drawing back from God. In this case was the old world, when the great Architect of nature viewed it, “ And God saw that “ every imagination of the heart of man was only “ evil continually.” Here is an apostate world, apostatized in thoughts ; their degeneracy is attended with perdition ; in a short while after they were of those who drew back. What a

* Psal. lxxviii. 37.

pity it is that these thoughts that are capable of reaching the most divine and spiritual Being, though not of comprehending, should be thus degenerated, as to be only employed about base sinful actions, and brutal enjoyments. If you allow this most noble part of the soul to go astray, you'll find difficulty to keep the other powers right.

WHEN men backslide in their judgment and understanding, one corruption in the soul leads on to another; one power and faculty degenerated, tends to corrupt and draw away another. Men commonly judge according to the notions they have of things: Backsliders in judgment do sometimes fall away by slow degrees, and sometimes suddenly, and all at once: Hence errors and heresies proceed, when the understanding grows dark, by reason of its alienation from God and his word: Then men are apt to advance their own judgments and opinions, contrary, and in opposition to the word of God; so they construe evil good, and good evil. The Lord, by the prophet Isaiah, denounces a woe against such:—Them who give judgment, in opposition to the will and declaration of God in the scriptures. Mens judgments are debauched and drawn away, when they begin to halt be-

twixt two opinions, as Israel's was when Elijah reproved them, "How long halt ye between
" two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow
" him," &c. When men are tossed to and fro
by every wind of doctrine, then the judgment
gives way to a false heart, and draws back from
that which is only to the saving of the soul.

THE heart may be said to draw back, when
it evidently appears so in peoples love and affec-
tion. Love is the bond of unity; when this is
broke, there is a separation betwixt God and
men. This is known, by a love to God's ways,
ordinances, and providences. This is also evi-
dent, when we abandon the company of good,
and take up with idle company. When they
forsake assembling together with God's people,
may not this very complaint be lodged against
many of us, "I have somewhat against thee,
" because thou hast left thy first love." How
very few can say with the apostle Peter, "Lord
" thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I
" love thee."

WHEN they grow stubborn and rebellious in
their wills, then may the heart be said to *draw
back*. The will of a good man is, to be in sub-
mission to the will of God; but a wicked man

says with the Jews, " They will not have this
 " man to rule over them." When the will does
 not comply with precepts, nor submit to ordi-
 nances, then there is a drawing back. Stephen
 very strongly and pathetically reproves the Jews
 for this defection, " Ye stiff necked, and uncir-
 " cumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist
 " the Holy Ghost." How often did the child-
 ren of Israel rebel and murmur against the Lord?
 The prophet Nehemiah reprehends them in the
 severest terms, " Nevertheless, they were dis-
 " obedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast
 " thy law behind their backs," &c.

SECOND, Drawing back in the life, when
 people may be said to draw back in their lives
 or conversations.

WHEN men allow themselves in, and excuse
 themselves for their sin; then may they be said
 to draw back in their lives and conversations,
 from the ways of God, and profession of religion.
 Good men may err, and fall into gross sins, but
 will not vindicate their conduct, nor be ready
 to argue in its favour. How many are ready to
 excuse themselves, and say of their sins as Lot
 did of Zoar, " O it is but a little one, spare it."
 There are many positive sins, which are eviden-

ces of mens drawing back from God and religion.

WHEN men turn lewd and profane in their conversation. Some people cannot be together, unless they profane the terrible name of God by execrable oaths. How inconsistent is this with the third commandment, that forbids the taking of God's name in vain. The keeping of idle company corrupts good manners; and Joseph himself, when in Pharaoh's court, began to swear by the life of Pharaoh.

WHEN they turn unjust in their actions, they then withdraw from the steadfastness of their profession: When professors begin to cheat, deceive, and dissemble, the profession of that man is vain, and to no purpose. The prophet Ezekiel complains thus of this sin, * *The people of the Lord have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy.* Do but consider, that no unjust person can enter into the kingdom of heaven: We are to live righteously and godly in this evil world. You stain your profession by such unworthy action. Let not religion be branded on your account: Regard the exhortation of Peter, "Having your conversation honest among

* Ezek. xxii. 29.

“ the Gentiles : They may, by your good works
 “ which they shall behold, glorify God in the
 “ day of visitation.”

WHEN professors live in strife and contention, then do they draw back from their religious profession. It is true, my friends, offences will come, but observe what follows, “ Wo to them by
 “ whom they do come,” *i. e.* they who are the occasion of them. Our blessed Saviour tells Peter, that he was an offence to him :—It was not Christ’s fault, but Peter’s. Sooner or later these salamanders, who live in the fire of contention, will find a fire in their conscience, and another that will torment them to all eternity. How can God be at peace with them, who will not be at peace amongst themselves. Oh! my friends, pray with the psalmist, “ That peace may be within
 “ thy dwellings.”

WHEN professors turn carnally minded, or earthly and covetous, then they degenerate and draw back. There are too many that “ Savour not
 “ the things of God,” so much do they regard the world, and the things thereof. The chief of their esteem is, what they should eat, and what they should drink, forgetting the one thing needful.

DID men but consider and reflect upon the words of our divine Saviour, recorded by the evangelist Luke, "This night thy soul shall be taken from thee,"—would be less concerned about transient and fading pleasures, and more anxious in laying up a treasure that is incorruptible. What a dismal character does the apostle Paul paint, when writing to the Philippians, "Whose god is their belly,—they mind earthly things." There can be no fault found with people for providing for themselves and families, provided it be agreeable to law and equity: But our religious profession is frequently destroyed by an immoderate and vexatious care about the world, and the things that are of the world; such as, * *The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, which too often draw the attention, even of the people of God, from their duty, and the only true method of living unto the Lord.

MEN draw back in their lives, when they neglect the practice of religious duties. This is the devil's common way, first to engage men in sinful actions, and then to make them refrain from those religious exercises which before they counted their duty.

* 1 John ii. 16.

WHEN they altogether omit the duties of God's worship. Is the profession of any man to be regarded, who will not bow the knee to God, or wait upon his ordinances ; no wonder that such a one be a rogue and villain among men, that will not regard the Most High, " God threatens to " pour forth his fury on the families that call not " on his name.

WHEN they carelessly and slothfully perform their duty. God will not have sluggards in his vineyard, " We must not be slothful." When men thus draw back, there is an alienation from, and an indisposition to perform duty. If men neglect their duty one day, they let it alone the next, and the next : When they do go about it, it is in such a careless manner, that it appears painful to them ;—then they totally omit it.

SECOND, To shew why professors should take heed that they draw not back.

God takes no pleasure in such as draw back, or apostatize from him. This powerful argument may stop us from backsliding : What a dismal condition must they be in, who incur the displeasure of the Almighty : And it is no wonder that God should be displeased with such ; for

their language and actions are the greatest presumption and rebellion: It is as much as to say, they do not love God for their master, and that his work and service is the greatest burden. The apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, in the strongest manner declares, that, "if any man draw back, my soul will have no pleasure in him," *i. e.* The supreme Author of our being cannot, with complacency and delight, look upon such as forsake their holy profession. Christians should take heed of doing any thing that is displeasing to God: It is much safer for them to offend all the men in the world. Enoch had that most excellent testimony, "that he pleased God."

BECAUSE such as apostatize from God will be destroyed. Backsliders are sentenced already, and they may find their judgment and fate is perdition; nothing is wanting to make them eternally miserable, but the execution of the sentence, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition." Some may draw back, and not to perdition: There is a partial, and there is a total falling away. Many a good man has fallen: Nay, there is no man lives, and sins not; but yet these did not all draw back to perdition. The apostle indeed insinuates, that there are others that fall totally and entirely away, and these

end in destruction and perdition. Dreadful thought, thus to be destroyed! It implies in it the punishment of loss,—the want of God's gracious presence,—the loss of eternal happiness.

THE punishment of sense. To be eternally miserable with the devil and his angels.

BECAUSE such as draw back are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is taken in different senses in the scriptures: Sometimes for the manifestation of the grace of God in the gospel, in and through Jesus Christ. Those who draw back are not fit for coming to our divine Saviour: They are only preparing themselves for ruin and misery. Sometimes it is taken for the kingdom of glory: These who draw back despise all the glory of the upper house: These who turn rebels to their lawful Sovereign, are not fit to see the King's face: These who turn renegades from Christ, the Captain of their salvation, are not fit for the kingdom of heaven, * *And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.*

BECAUSE such act very unbecoming the go-

* Luke ix. 62.

spel. The gospel precepts are, that we should be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. O who would linger in a barren wilderness, and be entangled with the thorns of sin and error, when the pleasing scenes of paradise are open to his view. These who draw back are like the waves that are tossed to and fro: They also act contrary to the gospel-pattern; for it is recorded of the ante-diluvian saints, that they died in the faith, and were stedfast; but apostates, do neither live nor die in the faith. They also act contrary to the gospel-promises, and, in effect, despise them. The promise is only to them who “endure to the end, shall be saved.” These act unbecoming the gospel-privileges. Many blessed privileges we enjoy;—the outward ordinances,—the word and sacraments. How unbecoming and ungrateful is it for any to turn back from God and his ways, while he loads them with such benefits! May not the supreme Being renew the old complaint, * *Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain.*

THEY open the mouths of adversaries. It

* Jer. ii. 5.

pleases the grand adversary of mankind, to see so many turn apostates like himself. With what satisfaction does the wicked contemplate the backslidings of professors; demonstrating thereby that they are in Satan's service. It was no small joy to the Jews, to behold Judas playing the traitor;—it gave them a handle to seize and slay the Redeemer of the world. Apostacy does not only open the mouths of enemies, but gives them a handle to introduce the most dreadful and tragical miseries upon the people of God. The apostle Peter's caution was a most seasonable and suitable one, “ Having your conversation honest
 “ among the Gentiles: That whereas they speak
 “ against you as evil doers, they may by your
 “ good works which they shall behold, glorify
 “ God in the day of visitation.”

MEN, by their apostacy, grieves the hearts of God's people. When religion thrives, then God's people thinks their best interest thrives and prospers. The gaining of souls to God is real gain to them. The apostacy of a professor flattens their spirits, grieves their souls, and makes their hearts heavy, and ready to cry out, O that ever Satan should have got such advantage! Oh! how heavy it is, that Christ should lose any ground! The apostate prophets among the Jews, made

the hearts of God's people sad by their apostacy,
** Ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom
 I have not made sad ; and strengthened the hands of
 the wicked, that he would not turn from his wicked
 way, by promising him life.*

WE should take heed of drawing back ; because God has frequently inflicted visible judgments upon them who have apostatized from him, either in heart or in life, “ The backslider “ in heart shall be filled with his own ways.” And if God give a person over to himself, he will soon find his own way prove his ruin. God not only threatens this, but sooner or later makes them monuments of his wrath. Judas Iscariot is a striking instance of this : His apostacy issued in his laying violent hands upon himself. Why are we commanded to “ Remember Lot's wife !” Apostacy ought to warn us to take heed to her sin. O God, grant us such a measure of thy grace, as to pass the time of our sojourning here with fear, with a stedfast dependance upon thy direction.

THIRD, Apply.

FROM what has been said, we may justly infer

* Ezek. xiii. 22.

how dreadful the state of apostates is. Their lives on earth are a torment and burden :—Their consciences fly in their face, and accuse them for forsaking good, and doing evil :—Their state is most miserable in the life that is to come.

WE may also infer, how comfortable and happy it is to the saints, who can say with the apostle, “ We are not of them who draw back “ unto perdition.” The evidences of a persons stability in the ways of God, are most solacing to the soul. How assuredly does the psalmist speak of their steady adherence to God ! “ Our “ heart is not turned back, neither have our “ steps declined from thy way.” You who have turned your backs upon religion, O consider what you have done ! you have forsaken God, the fountain of living waters ; you have abandoned his ways, which are ways of pleasantness, and his paths, which are peace : You have opened the mouths of enemies, and dishonoured our holy religion.

CONSIDER what you will do ; how can you think to stand before the face of an angry God. If you have abandoned the Author of your being, do not you think he will abandon you.

TO such as are indifferent about it. Commonly an indifferency in religion precedes a total and final apostacy from God; as you see in the case of the church of Laodicea, “ Because thou art
“ luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will
“ spew thee out of my mouth.”

TRY whether you are of them that draw back or not. Look into your states, look into your life and conversation. Dreadful are the thoughts of apostates, to the evidences of our being faithful to God, and our not being amongst them that draw back is most comfortable.

ARE the articles of the Christian faith, the articles of your faith? Do you believe in the only living and true God? Can you say with the psalmist, “ There is no God besides him?” Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners? and that there is no other way of being saved but by faith in him. Can you set your seal to this truth, “ Neither is their salvation in any
“ other?” And that although he died, yet he rose again, and lives and reigns for evermore. That God is, and that there is a reward for his people;—then thou art not going back with respect to these principles, “ For he that cometh to
“ God must believe that he is, and that he is

“ the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Is the life that thou livest a life of faith. Doeſt thou not only believe firmly theſe articles, but art thou comforting, ſolacing, and ſupporting thy ſoul with that faith. Art thou purſuing after the things which belong to your peace here, in hopes of enjoying it eternally hereafter. Then have you good ground to ſay with the apoſtle, That thou art ſo far juſt, and liveſt by faith; and that thou art not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them who believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

If thou liveſt a life of faith, thy faith will be growing and perfevering, and at laſt will be turned into fruition and enjoyment.

Is your converſation becoming the goſpel? Is it in obedience to the goſpel precepts? Is it in ſubmiſſion to the providences of God? Is it in dependance upon his promiſes? “ Then let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt.” Our ſplendid profeſſion will but little avail, if our converſation does not adorn it. Are you then ſpiritual, holy, heavenly, and humble in your converſation? A good teſtimony that you are not “ of them who draw back.” But

on the contrary, if you are vain, prophane, lewd, carnal, unjust, and unholy, then it is a strong symptome that you are drawing back from God and his ways, which are all holy, just and good.

LET me exhort you, my dear brethren, to be stedfast in the ways of God ; let your dependance be entirely upon him. When you are ready to say that you have not sufficient strength to withstand temptations in yourselves, this very sense of your own weakness should lead you to one that is mightier and stronger ; who has said, “ My grace is sufficient for my people.” It is sufficient to uphold thee from falling, and to constrain thee to thy duty. Depend therefore upon God, he never failed them who put their confidence in him. Go then, as the spouse did, leaning on thy beloved, and God’s left-hand will be under thy head, and his right-hand will embrace thee.

Do not live in the omission of any duty, either to God or man ; let your love to God abound, and testify it by a conscious discharge of your duty to him. If you forsake your duty, God will forsake you, and will at last pour forth his wrath and fury upon you. Do not omit

prayer ; apostacy frequently begins at the closet door : By omitting duty, will lead thee to commit iniquity.

WITHDRAW not from ordinances : These are the only places where God's glory is seen, and his power felt. We are not to decline the assembling of ourselves together.

KEEP a steady watch over your own actions, least at any unguarded moment the adversary seduce you. Our blessed Saviour, when fortelling his disciples of the many temptations, the many trials and hardships they had to wrestle with, which would greatly tend to expel any small spark of love that might be still remaining in their breasts towards him, and which might lay a foundation for their apostatising from him, he exhorts them at the same time “ to watch and “ pray.” We have the greater reason to follow this blessed admonition, as “ our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” and too often betray us into error.

It is certain, that God will not watch over any person who will not watch over himself ; nor will he give, neither can they expect any favours from him, who will not ask them by prayer.

How can he expect the reward of the righteous, who hath not loved righteousness? Or he the reward of his labour, who hath stood all the day idle; When he sees the storm approaching, and ready to overwhelm him, what rock has he to flee to? what a covert to shield him from the tempest? Whereas the good, the pious, and the praying man, when he enters the dark valley, and walks in the shadow of death, he fears no evil; God is with him, his rod and staff is ready to support him. He knows in whom he hath believed; and as he hath made it his study to follow peace and happiness with all men, his heart is prepared for such spiritual enjoyments, and his dwelling shall be with God for evermore.

TAKE heed and beware of carnality and covetousness. Too eager and immoderate a love to perishing enjoyments, very much hinder people from being steadfast in the ways of God. Some, rather than lose one day's work, would lose the hearing of twenty sermons. This covetousness is the root of apostacy. This made Demas forsake the work of the Lord, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world."

BEWARE of taking offence at the ways of God. Some are offended at the strictness of the

commands, some at the ministers, some at the people, and others at the troubles that attend God's people, "When tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word, by and by he is offended."

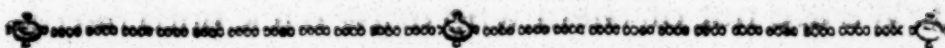
SOME *draw back* when they see miscarriages of some professors, they readily conclude that we are all such, and religion is nothing but a cloak, and the professors of it but cheats. We must not forsake Christ, because Judas was one of the twelve. Would we have leapt out of the ark, because Ham was in it.

IF you would be kept from drawing back, never be too fond of following your own opinion, where it interferes with the principles of religion. What is the occasion of all the errors and heresies that are in the world but this? Every man will do that which he pleases, and one notion is immediately followed by another, until they entirely break off from Christ, they know not for what; and then every one has his followers, and Christianity is lost among them, and vain conceits and opinions maintained.

To conclude, let us all be convinced to submit our reason to the wisdom of God, who is

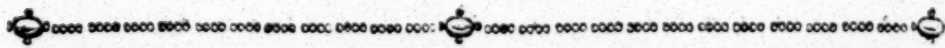
the author of every good gift. Let us take delight in contemplating him, of whose greatness there is no end; whose essence is higher than heaven, and deeper than hell; the measure whereof broader than the sea, and longer than the earth; who *inhabits eternity*: That Being *who is above all*, through all, and in us all! The great, the first, and best of Beings! “Before
“whom ten thousand angels stand, and ten
“thousand times ten thousand minister unto
“him.” Look down upon us all, O Lord, and enable every one of us to say with the apostle,
“We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of
“the soul.”

S E R M O N XVII.



I C O R I N T H I A N S vi. 20.

*For ye are bought with a price : Therefore glorify
God in your body, and in your spirit, which are
God's.*



IN the preceding context, the apostle censures the conduct of the church at Corinth, for not excluding from their communion, a person who had been guilty of the detestable crime of incest : And from thence takes occasion to inveigh against all illicit commerce between the two sexes ; and a too free indulgence of these appetites which

we have in common with the animal creation. The arguments he uses for this purpose are strong and conclusive. In the 13th verse he tells us, that “the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” It was not the intention of the wise former of our bodies, that they should be wasted and spent in the gratification of impure lusts and appetites, but in his own service, as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. Besides, as he adds in the following verse, These curious machines are not designed to last only a few years, and then, by being mingled with their native dust, be lost for ever: That all-powerful Being, who raised up our Lord from the dead, will also raise them: And shall we, by the indulgence of brutal lusts and passions, deface and destroy these beautiful structures, which are designed to be reared anew by their almighty Architect, and fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body? If we have embraced the gospel in sincerity, and been initiated according to Christ’s institutions, we are become one with him, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones: And how impious and profane would it be, to take the members of the holy one of God, and make them the members of an harlot? The very thought is dreadful, and shocking in the highest

D d d

degree: And yet every Christian, who is guilty of this crime, stands charged with this horrible prophanation, as the apostle clearly proves in the *16th* and *17th verses*. “What? know ye not, “that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh: “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.” And the body of a Christian is not only considered as a member of Christ, but as the temple of the Holy Ghost, and therefore ought not to be made a receptacle of impure lusts and lascivious desires: This would indeed be making the house of God nothing better than a den of thieves: It would be associating the Holy Spirit with the offspring of hell; and attempting to establish a fellowship between Christ and Belial. These arguments the apostle adduces, in order to dissuade us from the detestable crime of fornication, are chiefly drawn from the dignified relation in which Christians stand to Jesus Christ, their Lord and head, and this relation is founded upon his satisfaction and atonement: And hence he farther adds, “Ye are not your own, “for ye are bought with a price.” Christ, by paying the price of our redemption, has exalted us to the highest dignity and honour,—to the nearest relation to himself; so near, that our bodies are not only members of his body, but likewise

the temples of his blessed Spirit : And hence arises the strong obligation that lies upon us to keep them pure and clean : Hence arises the reasonableness and propriety of this general exhortation in the text, “ Glorify God in your body, “ and in your spirit, which are God’s.” In discoursing a little from these words, I shall endeavour,

I. To shew what we are to understand by glorifying God in our bodies and in our spirits.

II. POINT out in what sense our bodies and spirits are God’s, And

III. DEMONSTRATE, that the consideration of their being so, obliges us in the strongest manner to employ them to his glory.

THESE are three topics which deserve our most serious attention and regard, on account of their infinite importance ; I need not therefore desire your attention, while, in a humble dependance upon divine aid, I attempt to explain and improve them. And O ! may that divine Spirit, whose temples we are, direct to such truths, as, through his blessing, may prove effectual for improving our understandings, and mending our

hearts, that both our bodies and spirits may henceforth be devoted to his glory, and employed in his service. *Amen.* I am,

FIRST, To explain what we are to understand by glorifying God in our bodies, and in our spirits.

THE glory of God is a phrase of very indeterminate signification in scripture. It is used sometimes to denote God himself, his essence, person and majesty. Sometimes the manifestation of his perfections, or attributes, by the external exercise of them towards his creatures: And because there is something distinctly worthy of adoration and praise, in every one of his divine perfections, when manifested in their proper and respective acts; 'tis no uncommon thing in scripture to express any one of them by this general title, "The glory of God." Thus the heavens are said to declare the glory of God, *i. e.* to demonstrate his power and wisdom. However, the sense in which this phrase is generally used, seems to be the manifesting of the several attributes of the divine nature, in the external exercise of them towards us his creatures: And therefore, on the other hand, for us to glorify him, or to give him glory, must signify, our contri-

bating all that lies in our power for the more illustrious display, for the clearer manifestation of his nature, perfections and attributes. And for this purpose, we are required in the text, to employ both our “ bodies and spirits.”

It is more than probable, that all that the apostle meant by glorifying God in our body, and in our spirit, was to abstain from fornication, or to restrain within due bounds, these appetites of the body which are incentives to impure gratifications. It appears evident, that this apostle, in several parts of his writings, understands body and spirit in this sense: By body, he means the grosser part of our composition; by the spirit, he understands the animal spirits, or the more refined part of our bodily frame, in opposition to the soul, which is purely spiritual, and of a quite different substance from matter. This I apprehend to be the idea he affixes to spirit, when he divides man into three parts, soul, body, and spirit: And the subject he had been treating of in the context, renders it probable at least, that this is his meaning in the passage before us. However, we shall at present take it in a more extensive sense, for the whole man, soul and body, with a design to shew how we are to glorify God in both.

IF we would wish to glorify God in our souls and bodies, we must be careful regularly to perform such religious acts as are most expressive of our dependance upon him, and the best calculated to excite in others the most pious sentiments and affections towards him. It is not sufficient that we entertain the most honourable conceptions of the divine nature and character, although this is, properly speaking, glorifying him in our souls; but we must express these internal sentiments, by those external acts of homage and acknowledgement, which either the nature of the exercise itself suggests, or the sacred scriptures have prescribed: And these, we are told, are public prayer and thanksgiving, “O that men would praise the Lord for his
 “goodness, for his wonderful works to the children of men: Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the
 “assembly of the elders.” This public worship of the supreme Being, is an explicit acknowledgment of our dependance upon him, and our obligations to his goodness: It is the best calculated to excite and cherish the most honourable sentiments of his exalted character; and to inspire our brethren of mankind with the deepest veneration, and the most exalted esteem of him: And can there possibly be a more effectual way

to promote his honour and glory? Very emphatical is the description St John gives us of the whole universe, joining in their several capacities, to give glory in this manner to their common Lord, * *Every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne.* But

IF we would wish to glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, we must not only be regular and constant in the public and private exercises of religion, but we must be careful to avoid every action that is irreligious, or directly sinful: Every deliberate sin, every act which is against a man's own conscience; every known transgression of a commandment, is offering a direct affront to almighty God: It is a despising his authority, contemning his laws, and defying his power, "The soul that doth ought presumptuously, reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Nor is it by gross and presumptuous sins only that God is dishonoured, but by every thing which in its circumstances is evil; by every action which is not approved of by our own minds, and which

* Rev. v. 13.

needlessly gives offence to others, or lays a stumbling-block before our weaker brethren, thereby causing them to fall. As God necessarily hates and abhors all kinds of sin, and every thing that leads to it; it must necessarily follow, that every immoral action, every thing that wounds and defiles either our own consciences, or the consciences of others, affronts and dishonours him. It is his wish and desire, that righteousness, sincerity, and truth, should universally prevail: It is his glory and delight, that the principles of piety, charity, and temperance, should have an absolute dominion over the hearts and wills of men; and therefore, whenever we act contrary to these principles, we resist his will, and counteract the designs of his wise government, and consequently endeavour to render him the object of contempt. Now, if by such a behaviour as this, we are said to dishonour God, then, on the other hand, we may be said to glorify him, when we pursue the opposite plan of conduct; when we live in all the commandments of our God, blameless; when we concur with the Supreme Governor of the universe, in establishing sincerity, righteousness, and truth amongst men; and in bringing about that beauty, order, and harmony in the moral, which is so conspicuous in the natural world. And if we have this great end constantly in view, we

will be exceedingly careful never to indulge ourselves in any thing that has the least tendency to wound the cause of virtue and goodness. Nay, so far from this, we will be regular and uniform, zealous and active in the discharge of all those duties and obligations which are recommended by scripture, reason, or conscience. In every situation and circumstance of life, we will endeavour so to conduct ourselves, as not only to meet with the approbation of our own minds, but to encourage and reclaim those with whom we converse. We will not only endeavour to grow in grace, and advance in holiness, but by every mean in our power, discourage vice and immorality in others, and inspire them with the love of the truth. In a word, “ We will cause
“ our light so to shine before men, that others
“ seeing our good works, may glorify our Fa-
“ ther who is in heaven.” Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there be any virtues, if there be any praise, on these things will we reflect and meditate, and these things we will perform, so shall we not fail of glorifying God in our bodies and spirits, which are his.

SECOND, To point out in what sense our bodies and spirits belong to God.

E c c

OUR bodies and spirits belong to God, as we derived them from him. Every thing in heaven and earth is his property, in virtue of creation, “ By him were all things created, that are in
 “ heaven, and that are in earth, visible and in-
 “ visible, whether they be thrones, or domini-
 “ ons, or principalities, or powers : All things
 “ were created by him, and without him was
 “ not any thing made that was made.” And this undoubtedly gives him the best right and title to every thing that exists. And consequently, our bodies and spirits, which are the effects of his creative power, must likewise be his property : For the manner in which the human species is now propagated, as fully evidence us to be his workmanship, and as clearly demonstrate his almighty power, as when he formed our first progenitor out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Hence he is said to be still the former of our bodies, and the Creator of our spirits, although he does not now so visibly interpose in the formation of the former as he did then, “ His hands have made
 “ us, and fashioned us ; he hath clothed us with
 “ skin and flesh, and fenced us with bones and
 “ sinews. His eyes did see our substance, yet
 “ being imperfect, and in his book were all our
 “ members written, which in continuance were

“fashioned, when as yet there were none of
“them.”

OUR bodies and spirits are God's, not only by creation, but likewise by preservation. It is owing to his never-failing goodness that our souls are preserved in life, and our bodies from corruption. Was he but for a moment to withdraw his all-supporting arm, that moment we should fall into our original state of non-existence: In him we live, move, and have our being; he alone maketh us to dwell in safety, and his visitation preserveth our spirits. Was not his almighty arm continually around us, these frail bodies of ours, made up of such a variety of parts, composed of such infinitely small vessels and fibres, must be immediately dissolved; but so careful is he of our preservation, so attentive to every thing that concerns us, that “not a hair of our heads
“can fall to the ground without his permission:” And even our souls are no less the objects of his care; for though they are of a substance different from our bodies, and incapable of being destroyed by those things which kill the body, yet their existence is, at the same time, owing to his constant preservation. Hence the psalmist says, “He upholdeth our souls in life.” Now that watchful providence, by which we are conti-

nually preserved, that tender care with which our almighty Father watches over us, though it does not properly give, yet it certainly preserves his right and title to us inviolate ;—so that we are his, not only by creation, but likewise by preservation.

OUR souls and bodies are his by redemption. And this seems to be what the apostle had chiefly in his eye, when he used this expression, Ye are not your own, saith he, for ye are bought with a price, and consequently are the property of God, who hath redeemed you. In order to understand *how* we are God's in this sense, it will be necessary to attend to the following things :

WE have already seen, that in virtue of creation, God has an absolute right and property in us, and that by his providence he preserves this right. It will very naturally be asked then, how God came to lose his right, and by what means he purchased it again ?

IN answer to this, we must observe, that the great God having made man, appointed to govern him by a wise and righteous law, wherein glory and honour, life and immortality, were

the designed rewards for perfect obedience ; but tribulation and wrath, pain and death, are the appointed recompence to sinners who violate this law. Now, it cannot be denied, that all mankind have broken the law, and thereby have not only lost all pretence to the reward of life, immortality and glory, but subjected themselves to guilt and punishment. Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God : A sentence of wrath and death is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

By this voluntary apostacy from God, we have sold ourselves to sin and Satan : We are become debtors to law and justice. By our shameful rebellion, we have thrown ourselves out of the arms of omnipotence, we have rejected his authority, and put ourselves under the power of another : And though we are still God's property as creatures, yet he can no longer treat us as children, but as the objects of his wrath, as debtors to his law and justice, and as the children of the wicked one, till we are redeemed, or till complete satisfaction is made for all our offences : This being entirely out of our power, we must have remained for ever in these deplorable circumstances in which we had involved ourselves, had not he that made us had mercy upon us.

The sentence of God must have been executed upon us ; the law must have taken its course, and our bodies, after an unhappy life, been laid in the grave, and shut up in the chambers of death for ever ; and our immortal souls been condemned to linger out an eternity of woe. This must have been our fatal end, had not *HE*, whose compassions flow and fail not, provided a surety for us : And behold, with wonder and astonishment, “ How he hath redeemed us, and at what “ an amazing expence he hath again made us “ his own ! ” He appointed no less a person than his own Son, his only begotten Son, the eternal Son of his love, to undertake the arduous task. And that a full display of the terrors of his justice might be made, and his divine resentment for the violation of his law abundantly demonstrated, he appointed this same person, who was the object of his supreme delight, to satisfy for the breach of it, by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice of expiation, or atonement. It pleased the Father to make him our sacrifice, and substitute him in our room and stead : He ordained that he should put himself into our circumstances, as far as was possible ; and that he should sustain as near as possible, the very same pains and penalties which we, by our sins, had incurred. And since tribulation, and anguish of soul and body,

a sense of the wrath of God, and death, were the appointed penalties of our sins, therefore he determined that his own Son should pass through all these: And since the law pronounces its curses upon every one who does not obey it in all things, therefore Christ was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law. Hereby he gave a most awful and sensible demonstration to the world of mankind, how dreadful a thing it is to break the law of God; what infinite evil is contained in sin, and at what a terrible rate it must be expiated and atoned for.

BUT the Son of God being immortal, he could not sustain all these penalties, without taking our mortal nature upon him: Thus his incarnation was necessary to make him a proper surety and substitute for us. It was because the children to be redeemed were partakers of flesh and blood, that he himself also took part of the same, that by his own dying, he might make atonement for their sins. Sacrifice and offerings of beasts, says he, in the prophetic language, thou wouldst not accept as an equivalent for the sins of men; but a body hast thou prepared me, that men might be redeemed by the offering of the body of Christ once for all. And when guilt was thus

transferred to him, he became liable to punishment. Hence, he that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. His own *self* bore our sins in his own body on the tree: The chastisement or punishment of our peace was upon *him*, and by *his* stripes we are healed. Thus, by the appointment of the uncreated fountains of love and goodness, did our blessed Lord voluntarily put himself in our room and stead, and undertake to pay a ransom for us: So that we may well say with the apostle, we are not redeemed with such corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. Well might the apostle say, we are not our own, but we are bought with a price;—bought from the most wretched slavery, from the most cruel tyranny, from the most intolerable bondage, with a price;—a price of no common value; nay, of infinitely more worth and value than the whole universe; for it was the blood of him who was both God and man in one person.

Is there not then something very emphatical in this word *therefore* in the text,—Therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits. Does it not imply, that we ly under the strongest obligations

to this duty that can possibly be laid upon creatures? And this leads me to the

THIRD and last thing proposed in the method, *viz.* To shew what obligations the consideration of our bodies and spirits being God's, lays us under to spend them to his glory.

WE have already seen, that our bodies and spirits are God's by creation; and this certainly gives him the best claim to all the homage and service we can possibly pay him. As he is our absolute Lord and Maker, from whom we derive all our powers and faculties, and every thing we enjoy, he has a right to demand of us all that is in our power to give; and we cannot refuse it, without incurring the guilt of rebellion. Has he commanded us to use these bodies which he hath formed, and these spirits which he hath created, as instruments for promoting his glory, and shall we refuse it? Has he so wisely constituted us, and rendered us so capable of serving the great ends of his administration, and shall we do all in our power to counteract them? Certainly not. Let us then attend to that almighty voice which called us unto being, and now desires us to glorify him in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his. There can be nothing

more reasonable than this. God hath raised us high in the scale of being; he has made us only a little lower than the angels, crowned us with glory and honour, and given us dominion over the works of his hands: He has given us more wisdom than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of heaven. And can we think that all these dignified privileges were bestowed upon us for nothing? Were they not intended by our all-wise Creator to lead us to a superiority of conduct, to engage us to act up to the dignity of our natures? If we do not employ the various powers of which we are possessed, in glorifying our Maker, we are worse than the inferior orders of beings: For all these never cease to proclaim their Maker's praise. The animal, the vegetable, and the inanimate part of the creation, uniformly observe these laws which were settled at the first formation of things; and shall we, who are endowed with reason and understanding to comprehend the laws of our Maker, and with a will to chuse them, be the only part of his works who shall mar the beauty of his creation, and cast dishonour upon its great founder, by our sinful and irregular lives? Shall we pay no regard to our own dignity and honour, but suffer ourselves to be outdone by those very beings which we despise? Let us

not incur that dreadful reflection which was made upon the insensible Jews, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib :
“ But Israel doth not know, my people doth not
“ consider. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times ; and the turtle, and
“ the crane, and the swallow ; but my people
“ know not.”

BUT again ; our obligation to glorify God in our bodies, and spirits, will farther appear, when we consider that they are *his* by constant preservation. We are sustained by his breath, we are upheld by his power, we are cherished by his providence, and live entirely upon his bounty and munificence : And does not this call upon us in the strongest manner to give glory to our constant preserver ? Is it in him we live ? and shall we live for another ? Is it in him we move ? and shall we move beyond the limits he hath prescribed ? He is constantly showering down numberless benefits upon us, and giving us all things richly to enjoy : His mercies are new unto us, not only every morning, but every moment : He has filled our hearts with food and gladness : His powerful, though unseen hand, has conducted us through all the mazes and labarinths of life, warded off the fatal blow, and kept our feet

from stumbling upon the dark mountains. In a word, he has nourished and brought us up from the womb; he has watched over us with the care and affection of a tender parent; he has liberally supplied our manifold returning wants. And does not all this oblige us, both in point of duty and gratitude, to live to his honour and glory? Do we not, in the common occurrences of life, feel ourselves powerfully constrained to make all proper returns to a generous benefactor? Shall we then be insensible of the benefits conferred upon us by the great Parent of the universe, whose beneficence as far exceeds that of our fellow man, as his power does? Certainly not: We will not, we cannot bear him to make the sad reflection, "I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me." We will never be ungrateful to our best friend, and most bountiful benefactor; but our souls, bodies, and spirits, shall be devoted to his fear, and employed in his service.

WHAT still farther obliges us to this, is the relation in which we stand to him as our Redeemer: We are bought with a price, and therefore ought to glorify God in our bodies and spirits. This is an argument to holiness, both in heart and life, which is peculiar to the gospel; and it

is certainly the strongest that can possibly be addressed to the mind of man : It is the best calculated to work upon our ingenuity, and to excite all the generous feelings and sentiments of the soul, the only springs and sources of the most cheerful and acceptable obedience. The arguments to holiness, drawn from the authority of God, as our supreme Lord and Sovereign, from the intrinsic beauty and excellency of virtue, and from the influence it has upon our present and future happiness, have all a very considerable weight and power ; but this drawn from the love of God is superior to them all : This, when rightly understood, and fully comprehended, has a force and energy over the heart which is irresistible : This, this is the powerful engine, by which the Almighty sweetly inclines, and gently draws the hearts of men to himself : It is by this that he makes them willing in the day of his power. Hence the apostle says, “ The love of Christ
“ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that
“ if one died for all, then were all dead : And
“ that he died for all, that they which live,
“ should not henceforth live unto themselves,
“ but unto him who died for them, and rose a-
“ gain.”

IN order to form some faint idea of the strength

of the obligation that lies upon us to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which arises from the consideration of their being his by purchase, allow me to appeal to your own judgment, by putting a case that bears some distant resemblance to the one before us.

DID some mighty prince, merely out of compassion for some miserable captive, who being unable to purchase his freedom, was confined to a doleful prison, and condemned to grievous sufferings from a merciless tyrant; did this prince, I say, submit for his sake, to lie in that doleful dungeon many years, where otherwise he must have lain for ever; did he submit to be scourged and tortured in his stead; and, after procuring his freedom, did he offer to admit him into all the endearments of social friendship; nay, to make him a partaker of all the dignities and honours of his throne: Think you, that his generous behaviour would call for no return? Would it bring this once miserable, but now happy man, under no obligations? I dare say I need not ask the question. Which of you, supposing you were this prince's favourite, would not love him with all your soul, and strive to please and delight him with all your power? Would you not think your future lives too short? all the powers and abili-

ties of which you are possessed, insufficient to make amends to such a benefactor?

WELL, my brethren, you have all such a benefactor! nay, one as much superior to what I have been hinting, as an eternal God to a perishing man! Christ hath in reality done this, yea, and ten times more, out of his unbounded love to each of our souls: He hath not only lived,—lived in a prison, a dungeon, far from his native kingdom, and his celestial home: He hath not only suffered,—suffered tortures beyond what heart can conceive, or tongue express; but he hath died,—died the most ignominious and painful death for us! His love was stronger than death! He hath lain in prison, he hath lived in the dungeon of this world; he hath suffered stripes and scourges; he hath endured all the curse of the law, all the agonies of a bloody sweat, a torturing cross, a crown of thorns, the taunts of sinners, the reproaches of enemies, the desertion of nearest and dearest friends; and all this, not for those who had any beauty or comeliness to recommend them, but for the wretched, the miserable, the poor, the blind, and the naked; even for your sakes, O sinners! in order to redeem you from the curse of the law under which you lay; from the power of Satan by which you were bound;

from the sentence of death unto which you were condemned; and from the eternal punishment which is to be inflicted upon those who accept not his grace. And after all this, is it possible you can refuse his request? A request so easy, so reasonable, so productive of happiness: It is no more than this, to glorify him in your bodies and spirits, which are his; to use your bodies as instruments of righteousness unto holiness, and your souls as alive from the dead; to preserve your whole spirit, soul and body, blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. You surely can never resist the constraining force of this all-powerful argument: Your hearts can never be so insensible to the impressions of love, so destitute of every principle of gratitude. Do you not now feel its constraining influence? Are you not now ready to say, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I will account no service too difficult to perform, no temptation too strong to resist, no danger too great to encounter, if I can only glorify thee on earth, and meet with thy approbation at last. If this is your fixed and determinate resolution, I must tell you for your encouragement, that your reward will not wholly consist in the pleasures and satisfaction of gratitude, but your souls and bodies, which you have used as instruments in promoting the glory of

your benefactor, shall be glorified by and with him, in these everlasting mansions of delight which he has purchased, and is now preparing for you, where you shall join the heavenly choirs, ascribing glory, honour, dominion and praise unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. But on the other hand, if you refuse to glorify him upon earth, you will not only be deprived of the happiness of glorifying him in heaven, but you will be made the objects of his vengeance, and instruments for the glory of his justice: And whilst the grateful followers of the Lamb, who cheerfully yielded up their souls and bodies to the love and service of their generous purchaser, are lifting up their grateful voices, in the highest strains of praise, making the vault of heaven re-echo with the noise of their universal harmony:—You who despised the price that was paid for you, and refused to be redeemed from iniquity, shall be wallowing in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, making your shrieks and lamentations ascend with the towering flames.

F I N I S.

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